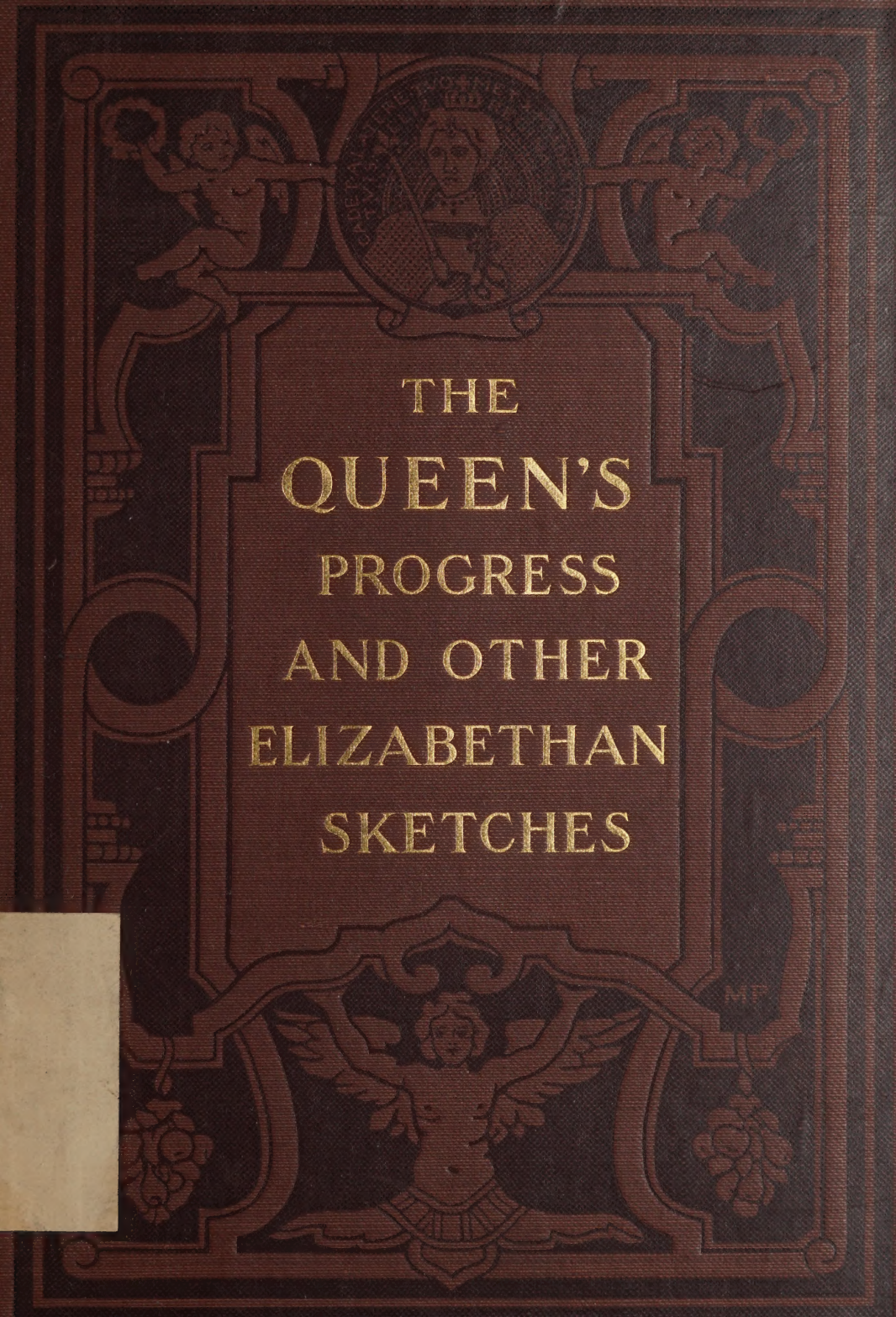
THE
QUEEN'S
PROGRESS
AND OTHER
ELIZABETHAN
SKETCHES

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THE *QUEEN'S* PROGRESS

&c.

Queen Elizabeth as Diana

THE QUEEN'S PROGRESS

AND

Other Elizabethan Sketches

By Felix E. Schelling

Omnia rerum omnium, si observentur, indicia sunt et argumentum morum ex minimis quoque licet capere.

Senec. Epist. 52. 12.

BOSTON & NEW YORK
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THE *following sketches — for they claim to be no more — are some of the lighter matters that have floated on a stream of reading and study which has already carried, let it be hoped, a somewhat weightier freight. It is one thing to taste the charm and flavor of an age; it is another to convey it. The days of Elizabeth and James were nothing if not multiform. Their trivialities even have their place, and their power to complete the picture, whether historical or literary: a power not always apprehended in view of the number and variety of the important figures that crowd the spacious canvas of that incomparable time. When Ben Jonson jotted in his commonplace-book the things which took his fancy as he read or the thoughts which rose in his mind touching certain human actions, he called his notes "discoveries made upon men and matter." Later came*

came the appraiser with his stylus and inventory of good things and of bad. Here is neither appraisement nor discovery; but the object simply written down as it appears to him who writes to-day; more truly seen, let us trust, than yesterday: perchance in need of more light from a clearer to-morrow.

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I

THE *QUEEN'S* PROGRESS

I

The QUEEN'S *Progress*

IT has been said that the character of the great Queen Elizabeth can be painted only in high lights; that if there were shadows in her nature, there were no depths; or at least that, if there were once depths, so consummate a mistress of deception and subterfuge had she become that it is idle to enquire if she were ever sincere. Brilliant, accomplished and imperious, tortuous in details, unscrupulous in choice of means to an end as her master Machiavelli himself almost, this latest daughter of the Italian Renaissance preserved — again like Machiavelli — a largeness of design in her political doings

doings which often raises them from the pettiness of intrigue to the wider domain of statesmanship. It was the recognition of this which kept men like Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Cecils her servants and councillors. But despite her haughty, unreasonable temper, her vanity and susceptibility to gross flattery, her mendacity, and her meanness in money affairs, there must have been something in Elizabeth as a woman to hold to her such men as Sidney, Spenser, and Raleigh, and to beget in them that choice spirit in which were mingled patriotic loyalty to a queen who embodied in her person the glory of England, and a chivalric devotion to ideal womanhood, each ennobling and dignifying the other. Years after Elizabeth's death so grave a man as Camden, the antiquarian, could write: "She was of admirable beauty and well deserving a crown, of modest gravity, excellent wit, royal soul, happy memory,

ory, and indefatigably given to the study of learning."

Whatever else may have been true of Queen Elizabeth, she had a genius for society. Her judgment, her tact, in all that pertained to the daily intercourse of the sovereign with her Court, her Parliament, or her people, was unerring. The skill with which she passed from the gravity of the council-chamber to a flirtation with Alençon or a galliard prearranged for the Spanish minister to witness her Majesty dancing unawares, was "an admiration to behold." For the wise counsellor, the witty courtier, the dull citizen, or the duller college pedant, Elizabeth had ever the proper answer or the ready retort. She could be gracious if she chose after a sore infliction of the inordinate length and preternatural learning of an Elizabethan sermon. She could reply, with many graceful womanish qualms as to the quality of her Latinity, in a carefully unprepared

unprepared speech, to learned addresses by the heads, dons, or scholars of Oxford or Cambridge. She could frighten her Commons, in language fit for a fishwife, into the obsequious granting of her subsidies against their will; arouse by her eloquence the untutored train-bands at Tilbury to a frenzy of martial ardor; or cap an epigram which a saucy courtier had scratched on the window-pane for her Majesty's eye. Fond of pleasure and display, thirsty for praise that might be interpreted to come as the unsought tribute of her beauty or accomplishment as a woman, Elizabeth none the less maintained, through many deviations and some vicissitude, the attitude of a queen, beloved by her people, and respected and feared abroad. How far she was merely a consummate actress, how far a woman, weak in all her strength, pathetic despite her queenly station, must be left for each to decide for himself. Certain it is that

that if Elizabeth was an actress, she had the world for her stage and marvelling Christendom for her auditors.

Like her father before her, the Queen was an enthusiastic lover of pomp and display. There was scarcely an action of her life from the trifling forms of the daily routine at Court to the dignified ceremonials of sovereignty which was not studied for its effect. Hentzner, a contemporary German traveller, has described the Queen's passage through the presence chamber of her palace at Greenwich on her way to morning service in her chapel. Somewhat shortened, his words run : —

"First went gentlemen, barons, earls, Knights of the Garter, all richly dressed and bareheaded; next came the Chancellor, bearing the seals in a red silk purse, between two, one of which carried the Royal sceptre, the other the sword of state, in a red scabbard, studded with golden *fleurs de lis*,

lis, the point upwards: next came the Queen, very majestic; her face oblong, fair, but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked; her lips narrow; she had in her ears two pearls with very rich drops; she wore false hair, and that red; upon her head she had a small crown; her bosom was uncovered as all the English ladies have it till they marry, and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels; her hands were small, her fingers long, and her stature neither tall nor low; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. As she went along in all this state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one, then to another, whether foreign Ministers or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French, and Italian; for, besides being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch, and Dutch.

Dutch. Whoever speaks to her, it is kneeling; now and then she raises some with her hand. Wherever she turned her face, as she was going along, everybody fell down on their knees. The ladies of the Court followed next to her, very handsome and well-shaped, and for the most part dressed in white. She was guarded on each side by the gentlemen pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes. In the ante-chapel next the hall where we were, petitions were presented to her, and she received them most graciously, which occasioned the acclamation of 'Long live Queen Elizabeth!' She answered it with 'I thank you, my good people.'"

It was amid stately and ceremonious scenes such as this that Elizabeth drank in the adulation so dear to every sovereign and every woman's heart; for in popular acclamation she must have found justification for the sinuousness and insincerity of a political

ical policy which could not but have preyed on a conscience even so robust as her own. It was, moreover, in the midst of such scenes that she found a solace for that loneliness which fate and her royal determination had decreed for her, and which ever attended her greatness like its shadow. Orations, songs and poems of welcome and farewell, allegorical groups, arches, and decorations, processions, plays, moralities and masques were Elizabeth's delight, and continued such to the end. It may be surmised that far more of the success of the earlier Elizabethan drama than is usually supposed is due to this taste of the Queen, which offered an example for the fashionable world to follow and afforded an excuse for the existence of theatrical companies by royal or other patronage. Of these varied amusements the "progress" was high in the royal favor. It combined several distinct advantages: amongst them a change

change of scene, opportunity for the display of loyalty and hospitality on the part of the Queen's host, and, counting by no means least in the estimation of her prudent Majesty, a material saving in her household budget. Hence it was that Elizabeth was wont to "go on progress" in the summer months, to sojourn with her loving subjects from a few days to weeks; to pass from one to another, visit the provincial towns and the Universities, and enjoy a surfeit of feasting, adulation, allegorical pageantry and entertainment. According to the excellent antiquarian, John Nichols, nearly three hundred castles, towns, or country-seats were thus visited by the Queen and her Court, and some hundred and sixty of her more important subjects had at one time or another submitted to the glory and the charge of entertaining a royal guest, at times to their permanent impoverishment.

To none of the progresses of Queen Elizabeth

abeth attaches a greater interest than to that during which she spent no less than nineteen days at Kenilworth Castle, the guest of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in July, 1575. The story of this progress has often been told by contemporaries, by antiquarians, and lastly and definitively by Sir Walter Scott, who has used the extant historical material to admirable advantage in his transfer of these brilliant scenes to the delightful pages of *Kenilworth*. Leicester was then at the height of the elaborate and subtile courtship which he paid to his sovereign through several years, sanguine of success, and eager in pursuit of the most difficult mistress that ever bade lover hope only to play with his despair. It required no little temerity to combine the rôle of subject, lover and councillor to such a woman and to such a queen; and a cleverer man than Leicester might well have been involved in the royal toils that were ceaselessly

lessly weaving to the confusion, perplexity, and overreaching of foe and friend. An interest of a different kind has been assigned by some to this progress, from the possibility that the boy Shakespeare may have been present (as was the greater part of the population of Warwickshire at various times), and that he may have received — as others have been bold to surmise — from this earliest contact with pageantry and stage-craft the first strong impetus towards his future career.

In the absence of an obsequious daily press to chronicle the goings and comings of royalty, we can imagine how impatiently the curious, whose station in life forbade attendance at Court, must have awaited the pamphlet which was sure to appear describing the Queen's last progress. Laneham's *Letter, Whearin part of the Entertainment untoo the Queenz Majesty at Killingworth Castl in Warwik Sheer in this Soomerz Progress iz signified,* purports

purports to be no more than a private message to "hiz freend a Citizen and Merchaunt of London." It was, however, indubitably written for the booksellers, and helped to swell the comfortable coffers of the lively and conceited little "clark" whose duties in office he thus describes: "Now, Sir, if the council sits, I am at hand; wait at an inch, I warrant you. If any make babling: 'Peace,' say I, 'wot ye where ye are?' If I take a listener or a prier in at the chinks or at the look-hole, I am by and by in the bones of him. If a be a friend or such a one as I like, I make him sit down by me on a form or a chest; let the rest walk, a God's name."

Laneham had the maggots of phonetic spelling in his brain, as the title of his letter just given sufficiently shows. They need not infect us, as he had also "the power adays (while the council sits not) to go and to see things sightworthy and to be present

present at any show or spectacle anywhere this progress represented unto her Highness."

The entertainments of a queen's progress were like the meals of the day — very substantial affairs and of almost an equal variety. On the very first day her Majesty's power of endurance was thoroughly put to the test. Starting at noon from Islington, a town some miles from Kenilworth, and hunting by the way, the Queen could scarcely have reached the privacy of her own apartments until ten o'clock that night. Between the tilt-yard where she arrived about eight and the door of the castle alone, she ran the gauntlet of the speeches, music and posturing of ten sibyls, sundry porters, six trumpeters, Proteus, the Lady of the Lake, and "a poet in a long ceruleus garment" who stopped to explain — we may be sure with all the leisure of poets — a succession of pillars decorating the bridge and dedicated respectively

respectively to Sylvanus, Pomona, Ceres, Bacchus, Mars, and Phœbus, ending with a lengthy Latin inscription crowning the door itself.

In the days that followed, all that princely expenditure could procure and inventive ingenuity could devise was lavished to produce novelty after novelty. There were ridings and hunting attended with enchanted music which spake out of trees and hedges; unexpected meetings in the woods with fauns and savage men, who discoursed elegant allegory; tilting in the tilt-yard and graceful dancing of lords and ladies in the presence. There were feats of agility, mock fights and bear-baiting by day, and masques in the hall and fireworks on the lake at night. These last made a deep impression upon Laneham, who records how "the Altitonant displays me his main power; with a blaze of burning darts, flying to and fro, gleams of stars coruscant and hail of fiery sparks,

sparks, lightnings of wildfire, a-water and land, flight and shoot of thunder-bolts, all with such continuance, terror and vehemence, that the heavens thundered, the water surged and the earth shook, in such sort surely, as had we not been assured the fulminant deity was all but in amity, and could not otherwise witness his welcoming unto her Highness, it would have made me for my part, as hardy as I am, very vengeably afeared."

The second Sunday of the Queen's stay was enlivened with a rustic "bride-ale," described by the dapper little clerk of the council chamber door with great gusto and in much the mood of contemptuous pleasantry in which Shakespeare treats his company of "base mechanicals" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. "The bridegroom foremost, in his father's tawny worsted jacket, . . . a fair strawn hat with a capital crown, steeplewise on his head; a pair of harvest gloves

gloves on his hands as a sign of good husbandry; a pen and inkhorn at his back, for he would be known to be bookish; lame of a leg that in his youth was broken at football: well beloved yet of his mother that lent him a new muffler for a napkin that was tied to his girdle for [fear of] losing. . . . Then followed his worshipful bride, led (after the country manner) between two ancient parishioners, . . . a thirty year old, of color brown-bay, not very beautiful indeed, yet marvellously fain at the office because she heard say she should dance before the Queen. . . . After this bride, came there two by two a dozen damsels for bride-maids, that for favor, attire, for fashion and cleanliness were as meet for such a bride as a treen ladle for a porridge-pot." Into the exaggerated misadventures of these rustics in their running at quintain and their morris-dancing we shall not follow Laneham, whose jocular impertinence is that of a man who

who is at pains to create the impression that he has never been nearer to these common folk than now.

Following the "bride-ale" was a representation of the Hock-tide or Hox Tuesday play, as it was called, by men come over from the neighboring town of Coventry. Coventry had been famous throughout the Middle Ages for its pageantry; and "miracle" and "morality" had flourished there as nowhere else in England, if we except York and possibly London. For the Hock-tide play even a greater antiquity was claimed, as it was said to commemorate, by a yearly mock-fight with accompanying "rymez," the overthrow of the Danes by the men of Coventry on Saint Brice's Day, 1012. This commemoration is known to have continued from the year after the battle of Agincourt, 1416, to the Queen's visit to Kenilworth, on which latter occasion it was repeated at Elizabeth's request. These last

last presentations were under the direction of one Captain Cox, "an odd man, I promise you," says Laneham, "by profession a mason and that right skilfull, very cunning in fence, and hardy as Gawain; for his long-sword hangs at his table's end."

We shall not follow our cicerone in his account of "an ambrosial banquet," at which the number of dishes was three hundred and whereof "her Majesty eat smally or nothing," in his delight over "a swimming mermaid that from top to tail was an eighteen foot long," or into the intricacies of the speeches which Triton made or Arion sang in behalf of their master, "the supreme salsipotent monarch, Neptune, prince of profundities and sovereign seignior of all lakes." From another source it is related that Arion, having upon this occasion contracted a hoarse voice from sitting so long in the damp on his dolphin, awaiting the coming of the Queen, he snatched

snatched off his disguise and swore "that he was no Arion but e'en honest Harry Goldingham, who would sing as well as he could; whereat the Queen was exceeding delighted."

But if the festivities contained triumphs, there were disappointments as well. "Had her Highness happened this day to have comen abroad," says Laneham, "there was made ready a device of goddesses and nymphs which, as well for the ingenious argument as for the well handling of it in rime and enditing, would undoubtedly have gained great liking and moved no less delight." This device was an elaborate piece of allegory called the *Masque of Zabeta*, the work of the notable court poet Gascoigne, "being prepared and ready — every actor in his garment — two or three days together, yet never came to execution. The cause whereof I cannot attribute to any other thing," says the author, "than to

to a lack of opportunity and seasonable weather." Perhaps there was another reason, as a look at *Zabeta*, which its author was careful to have published in the next year with his account of the festivities in general, makes plain. The chief interlocutors of this masque are Diana and several of her nymphs, Mercury, Jove's Messenger, and Iris, the Messenger of Juno. Diana is deploring the loss of her most beloved nymph, Zabeta, and sends out her nymphs in various directions to look for her. In her lament she contrives thus to describe the lost paragon:

> My sister first, which *Pallas* hath to name,
> Envyed *Zabeta* for hyr learned brayne.
> My sister *Venus* feared *Zabetaes* fame,
> Whose gleames of grace hyr beuties blase dyd stayne;
> *Apollo* dread to touch an Instrument,
> Where my *Zabeta* chaunst to come in place:
> Yea, *Mercurie* was not so eloquent,
> Nor in his words had halfe so good a grace.

My

Mosque of Zabeta

My stepdame *Juno*, in hyr glyttering guyse,
Was nothing like so heavenlie to beholde:
Short tale to make, *Zabeta* was the wight,
On whom to thinke my heart now waxeth cold.

In the midst of her lament, Mercury arrives from Jove to explain how Zabeta has become a great queen, who, against all the wiles of Juno, has remained "in constant vow of chaste unspotted life;" whereupon Diana and her train kneel in obeisance before her Majesty. But now comes the gist of the matter; for, Diana and "Mercury being departed, Iris cometh down from the rainbow sent by Juno,"

Who crownèd first your comely head with Princely Dyademes?

persuading the Queen's Majesty that she be not carried away "with *Mercuries* filed speach, nor *Dyanaes* faire words, but that she consider all things by proofe, and then shee shall finde much greater cause to followe *Juno* then *Dyana*."

At

At the end the messenger rises to prophecy of unmistakable import:

> Where you now in Princely port
> have past one pleasant day,
> A world of wealth at wil
> you hencefoorth shall enjoy
> In wedded state, and therewithall
> holde up from great annoy
> The staffe of your estate;
> O Queene, O worthy Queene,
> Yet never wight felt perfect blis,
> but such as wedded beene.

Possibly considering the strength of all this allegory and the warmth of Iris's message, an intimation that her Majesty preferred not to be so directly courted in similitudes had most to do with the non-performance of *Zabeta*. That the Queen should have been permitted long to remain in ignorance of the nature of this masque, neither the assiduity of her suitor nor the vanity of his poet could have brooked. The progress came to an end and, contrary to

to the expectations and the fears of many, my lord of Leicester was still no more than my lord of Leicester, and Elizabeth had only passed through another flirtation, one of the many that had been and were yet to come.

II

AN *ELIZABETHAN* WILL

II

An ELIZABETHAN *Will*

ON the twelfth of January, 1559, William Breton "of the parryshe of saynt Gyles w^{t}out creplegate of London gentilman" departed this life at his "capitall mansion house in Redcrostrete." William Breton was the younger son of an excellent and ancient family settled in various midland counties of England. He had come up to London in youth, and engaged in trade. He had prospered, as his will abundantly proves; and, in the midst of the multifarious popular impulses that struck at the root of feudal tenures and unclasped even the rigid fingers of mort-main,

main, Breton had contrived to become a landed proprietor of no little wealth and importance; nay, some of the hereditary lands of the Bretons had fallen into the hands of this younger son in a manner certainly other than that of inheritance. We have no evidence of the nature of the ventures in which Breton made his money, and we shall not seek to cloud the memory of a man whose large testamentary charities seem to betoken a kind master and a citizen thoughtful of the needs of his indigent neighbors.

Despite all preconceptions and illusions, the great age of Elizabeth was hard, litigious, bloody, and corrupt. It was not until the next reign that a philosopher and a lord chancellor of England came to his fall by the confessed acceptance of a bribe; but Edmund Spenser, the gentlest of poets and of men, helped put to the sword, save for a few officers, a band of surrendered Spanish

Spanish invaders, at Smerwick in Ireland, and the famous Sir Thomas Gresham grew from modest proportions to the greatest financier and money-lender of his day on his travelling expenses and twenty shillings a day, a miracle which brokerage and compound interest alone will not completely explain. But thin partitions did divide merchant adventure from piracy, and the arms of Sir John Hawkins, "a demi-moor proper bound with a cord," were acquired not without much misery and suffering to people not of Sir John's race or color.

In such a state of society, the prospects of a clear head linked with not too scrupulous a conscience were boundless; and William Breton's was not the only case in which the younger son came in time to possess the paternal acres whilst his elder brother pined away in the Fleet, or found his *El Dorado* in a Spanish dungeon.

The immediate family of William Breton consisted

consisted of his wife Elizabeth, the daughter of a London merchant and, apparently, considerably her husband's junior, two sons, the younger of whom was afterwards to become the graceful poet Nicholas Breton, and three daughters: all minors at their father's death. The will is a carefully written document, decked out with the flourishes and proverbial piety of the age, and offering every evidence, from its inordinate length, that the scrivener was still paid under statute by the number of his words. By the terms of this document, William Breton devised certain tenements in Barbycan and Redcross Street to his wife absolutely, gave her a life estate in his "key and wharffe called Dyse," and bequeathed her "tenne kyen" on his farm at Walthamstow in Essex, one hundred pounds in money, half his "playt," her jewels, apparel, and many other articles. He also made her the guardian of the children. Beside

Beside many special bequests to each, the elder son received ten tenements in London of a considerable yearly rental, while the younger was granted the two manors of Burgh in Lincoln and Wykes in Essex. Among many other bequests, each daughter was to receive a marriage portion of two hundred marks (upwards of eight hundred pounds in present value), and no less than a thousand pounds were distributed in legacies to servants and in alms to the poor.

Let us reconstruct to imagination's inward eye the home in Redcross Street, its retinue of family servants, its garniture of family plate, jewels, gilt bedsteads, velvet and satin hangings. Stow tells us that "in Redcross Street on the west side from Saint Giles Churchyard, be many faire houses builded outward, with divers allies, turning into a large plot of ground, of old time called the Jewes Garden, as being the onely place appointed them in England wherein to

to bury their dead. This plot of ground . . . is now turned into faire garden plots and summer houses for pleasure." We may imagine the garden of William Breton as not so large indeed or so ambitious as that my lord of St. Albans set forth so deliciously in his *Essayes or Counsells Civill and Morall*, and yet not wanting in rosemary and sweet marjoram, briar, stock and gilly-flowers, "having a faire allie in the midst, ranged on both sides with fruit trees, that you may goe in shade," and prim with "images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff." Perhaps our worthy merchant was not above more practical gardening, and planted "melons, pompions, gourds, skirets, turneps and all kinds of salad herbes;" or, much to that worthy's disgust, set his honest gardener, King, to the care of rare and curious foreign plants and "simples," "for delectation sake unto the eie and their odoriferous savours unto the nose."

We

We can scarcely suppose our "capitall mansion" to have been constructed of anything better than wood, with clay or plaster outer panels of red or white. There were two or three stories, a low roof covered with thatch or perhaps tile, and windows of lattice and small diamond panes of Flemish glass. It is likely that all the outbuildings to the brew-house and mews were under one roof, and, considering the date, the luxury of a chimney may perhaps be doubted. "Within," as Lemnius, a contemporary Dutch physician, informs us, "all was strawed with sweet herbes and rushes. . . . Their nosegays, finely entermingled wyth sondrie sortes of fragraunte flowres in their bed-chambers and inner rooms, with comfortable smell cheered mee up and entyrely delighted all my sences."

Furniture was scant, and, besides a few chairs, and tables of common wood but spread with "fine naperie," consisted chiefly

chiefly of the standing and truckle beds, the garniture of each sleeping room, and of a large number of ornamental cupboards and chests, elevated on feet, of "sweet, rare, carven work," strengthened with wrought-iron bands and fastenings. The pantry was better equipped, and here might be seen abundance of bright pewter platters, tankards, fine linen, and possibly even some silver and Venetian glass. All the better rooms were hung with tapestry or "arras of Turkey work," displaying some classical or biblical story; or, perhaps in the merchant's household, made of but "right painted cloth," depicting such bits of worldly wisdom as "Beware the mouse, the maggot and the moth," or "Light gaines make heavy purses," and hanging sufficiently far from the wall to protect from damp and afford some eavesdropping city Polonius a hiding-place. With Shakespeare's Gremio might Breton exclaim:

My

My house within the city
Is richly furnishèd with plate and gold;
Basins and ewers; . . .
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;
In ivory coffers have I stuff'd my crowns;
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,
Valance of Venice gold in needlework,
Pewter and brass and all things that belong
To house or house-keeping.

The larder too was well supplied, for "our bodies doe crave a little more ample nourishment than the inhabitants of the hotter regions are accustomed withal," says Harrison. While it is likely that our excellent merchant had not yet become so infected with foreign customs as to employ "musicall-headed Frenchmen and strangers" as his cooks, he none the less indulged in "not onely beefe, mutton, veale, lambe, kid, porke, conie, capon, pig or so manie of these as the season yieldeth, but also some portion of

of the red or fallow deere, beside great varietie of fish and wild foule, and thereunto other delicates wherein the sweet hand of the Portingale is not wanting." In seasons of entertainment too there were "geliffes of all colours mixed with a varietie in representation of sundrie floures, beastes, foules and fruits, and thereunto marchpanes wrought with no small curiositie, marmilats, codinacs and sundrie outlandish confections." In the case before us, the "tenne kyen" at Walthamstow, willed to Elizabeth Breton, suggest rural plenty, and doubtless more than one family servant was employed to convey game and poultry from the Essex farm to Redcross Street or in the exchange of courtesies with kinsfolk or neighbors.

It was on his wines, however, that the merchant chiefly prided himself; and no less than fifty-six kinds of light wines and thirty of strong (from Falstaff's "excellent sherris" to the "small wines" of Gascony) are

are "accompted of bicause of their strength and valure." For every-day use the national drink was beer, made in monthly brewings by each matron and her maids, and varying in strength and excellence with the state and purse of the family.

We may picture to ourselves a wholesome and decorous family life, in which piety and thrift stood for the chiefest household gods. It speaks not a little for the trust which the old merchant reposed in his young wife, that we find him providing that the legacies to his daughters shall become void if either should marry without her mother's consent.

Unfortunately this trust seems not to have been very wisely bestowed. For some few years after her husband's death, Elizabeth Breton took to herself a new spouse in the person of Master George Gascoigne. The marriage was purely a matter of convenience. Gascoigne was handsome, dashing, well-

well-born, and penniless; he had been by turns a student, a courtier, and a man about town. Of late, he had gained a pretty reputation as a poet. It was even whispered — and what could be a stronger recommendation to the young city widow — that his name had been coupled in gossip at Court with the names of certain high-born ladies. At all events, in the bulky budget of the courtier's love poems, no sonnet can be found addressed to Elizabeth Breton. The citizen's young widow, comfortably ensconced in her "capitall mansion house in Redcrostrete," with the rents of a score of tenements and farms, was a tempting bait to the impoverished courtier with his recent experiences of a debtors' prison. Her children could offer no resistance, and the executors might prove not unmanageable. Possibly in view of the doubt cast on her first husband's gentility through his engaging in trade, the young widow was equally prone

prone to the alliance, as it was one with a veritable gentleman, whose hands at least had never been sullied with the getting, much less with the keeping of gold.

From the *Diary of a Resident of London*, under date of September, 1562, we glean the following: "The sam day at nyght betwyn viii and ix was a grett fray in Red-crossestret betwyn ii gentyllmen and ther men, for they dyd both mare [arrange to marry] one woman, and dyvers wher hurtt; thes wher there names, Master Boysse [Bowes] and Master Gaskyn [Gascoigne] gentyllmen." There is no proof of the identity of the poet with this Gascoigne, or of the widow Breton with the cause of this brawl. But aside from the fact that the "resident's" orthography will warrant any assumption, the time, the place, the characters and status of both parties make the supposition of identity colorable, and afford us a vivid illustration of the manners of

of the day, in which the hot blood that prompts to immediate personal encounter had not yet been cooled by the diabolic etiquette of the modern duel. Surely we can forgive the infatuation of the excellent city matron—if infatuation there really was—when so handsome and so well-born a gallant came from Westminster to pay her honorable court and ventured his life in defence of her honor.

Two years after the solemnization of this marriage, a jury at Guildhall entered into an enquiry before the Lord Mayor, the apparent object of which was the protection of William Breton's property against his widow and her new husband. We do not know what became of this suit. Perhaps it was amicably settled.

Too much is not to be expected from such a marriage; though there is little except its social disparity to guide conjecture. Elizabeth probably lived at Walthamstow, save

save for an occasional jaunt to town or visit among her city kinsfolk. Gascoigne, when not abroad in the wars or dancing attendance on the royal progresses, was busy with quill and inkhorn inditing sonnets to the Queen's ladies-in-waiting or concocting the bitter moral reflections and apothegms of the *Steele Glas* in an agony of repentance at the time of his "youth misspent." Elizabeth's kinsfolk called her "Madam;" and, on passing her in the street, gave her the wall; the poet thenceforth at least escaped the debtors' jail and influenced his younger stepson, Nicholas Breton, to a gentlemanly literary career.

Soon after, Gascoigne went abroad as an adventurer in the Dutch wars, whither we need not follow him. As to Elizabeth Gascoigne, we are at perfect liberty. She may have been an English Xantippe for aught we know, driving a not very philosophical Socrates into unmerited exile. Quite as possibly

sibly she may have been a very Penelope, dwelling meekly on her farm with her five children and besought in marriage for her "tenne kyen" by every eligible suitor in Essex. In either case her Ulysses returned, not without some damage at the hands of the sirens, and we find him restored to court favor, writing much repentant prose, and residing at Walthamstow till within a short time before his death.

We have thus before us three types of Elizabethan life, all represented with ceaseless iteration and variety in the comedies of the age. The rakish, well-born spendthrift has been a stock hero of the stage, time out of mind. The Elizabethan variety, however, claims a distinction that raises him out of the common category of the Aimwells and Charles Surfaces to a position of his own. There is a *naïveté* about the sinning of the Elizabethan scapegrace that almost justifies palliation. He is often very naughty,

naughty, but then he always cries *peccavi*, and his after-qualms of conscience are sometimes ludicrously at variance with the real magnitude of his offences.

Scarcely less familiar is the figure of the city maid or widow, her head full of the romances of a grand alliance, who delights to exclaim: "Though my father be a low-capped tradesman, yet I must be a lady; and I praise God my mother must call me Madam." The widow Breton was less unfortunate than one of these infatuates, who, having first signed away her settlement, drove off to the country in search of her husband's castle and an estate which with its appurtenances existed only in that worthy's fertile imagination. It is consoling to know that an even-handed playwright meted out poetical Nemesis to this wretch. He started on a voyage to Virginia with his ill-gotten wealth, but, wrecked ingloriously on the Isle of Dogs, was incontinently

tinently seized and clapped into jail by the bailies.

Lastly, Touchstone, the goldsmith of *Eastward Hoe!* is William Breton with a larger infusion of the *bourgeois;* Eyre of *The Shoemakers Holiday* represents the more jovial and homely character of a tradesman who has raised himself from the lowest round of the ladder by sheer mother wit. Bassanio's Antonio himself, whose noble want of the tradesman's knack shows him a merchant made, not born, is again a deviation to a higher class, the merchant adventurer. In all, the type consists of the sturdy, unimaginative Englishman, with an innate proclivity for money-getting, and his chief joy in his reputation for rectitude, his home, and the substantial comforts of life. The Elizabethan merchant was not essentially different from the English merchant of to-day, save that he indulged when he could in the slave-trade and displayed a decided

decided *penchant* for piracy on the high seas. Shifting social conditions, ineffectually stringent laws against usury, and the pernicious royal grants of monopoly go far to explain the fact that, amongst the Elizabethans, Mercury was still the tutelary god of merchants and of thieves; while the fervid Puritanism that devoutly believed it a service to God to spoil the tents of the children of Abimelech, together with the spirit of retaliation which the horrors of the Inquisition righteously inspired, is amply sufficient to transmute those larger adventurers, the Grenvilles and the Gilberts, the Hawkinses and the Drakes, from the gross metal of buccaneers into the gold of heroes.

III

THOMAS STUCLEY
GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER

III

Thomas Stucley
Gentleman Adventurer

The sixteenth century was the heyday of the adventurer. He infested every station of life, hectoring like Bobadil, resorting with needy gallants to Paul's Walk, the centre aisle of the cathedral, there to pick up the news of the day and perchance an acquaintance whose well-lined purse might discharge the expense of an "ordinary," the Elizabethan *table d'hôte*, for both; now pressing into the presence, or attending at the very door of the privy council, with secret information treacherously gleaned and a sword and a lying tongue

tongue for sale to the highest bidder. The air was full of projects, from Dr. Dee's plan to transmute pewter platters and ale tankards into gold to the capture of Spanish galleons laden with treasure and the founding of enduring empires beyond the seas. The Queen herself was a sharer in many a venture of trade and some of plunder; and the protection which many a red-handed marauder of the sea received from her Majesty was the mingled product of the royal admiration for his prowess and daring and an eager desire to participate in the spoils. Prentices standing on the cobble-stones of inn-yards craned their necks in the crowd to see rude theatrical representations of Whittington who, by his cat and the favor of the Emperor of Morocco, had risen to the acme of civic ambition, the lord mayoralty of the City of London. Rude scenes of noise and turmoil displayed the adventures of those four famous English prentices,

prentices, "sons of the old Earl of Bulloign," who after surmounting untold perils meet their father at the siege of Jerusalem and obtain, each of them, by the capture of the sacred city, a royal crown and a princely bride. Indeed the imaginations of poets scarcely exceed the actual experiences of many Englishmen at home and abroad, — their sailings on strange seas, their traversing of stranger lands, their hardships and perils, their encounters and hairbreadth escapes.

Amongst the host of Elizabethan adventurers there was none more daring, more unscrupulous, and more uniformly successful than Thomas Stucley, whom the Pope and the Spanish King afterwards dignified with the title "Duke of Ireland." Stucley was the third son of a small baronet of Devonshire, the county that gave to England Raleigh, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Hawkins, and so many other "brave navigators." Stucley's education in war — he seems to have

have had little other education — dates back to the last years of the reign of Henry the Eighth, under the Duke of Suffolk. Later, Stucley figures as one of the retainers of the Protector Somerset, in the failure of whose plans he was too deeply compromised to remain in England. He offered his services to Henry the Second of France, who shortly became so attached to the young Englishman that he designated him in a letter to King Edward, "our very dear and beloved son, brother, cousin, gossip and ally," and besought the English King to take Stucley back into his royal favor. The warmth of this recommendation is explained by the fact that Stucley was really a spy in the pay of France. With the thrift of his kind, he soon turned his equivocal position to advantage on both sides and maintained himself in a nicely adjusted equilibrium, at once a servant of the King of France and the loyal subject of Edward of England. This

This could not last, and before long Stucley found himself lodged in the Tower for reporting of the French King what the French King could never allow that he could possibly have said. From the Tower Stucley was delivered by the accession of Queen Mary.

Into the checkered career of Stucley for the next few years we need not pry. On the personal recommendation of Queen Mary he was received into the service of the Emperor. About this time Stucley is described as "commonly pretending himself to be a man of value and livelihood, when in truth he never had in his own right one foot of land, [but lived by] borrowing in every place and paying nowhere." Color is lent this, though the statement of an enemy, by the fact that, wishing to return to England in the train of the Duke of Saxony, Stucley wrote to the Queen beseeching that he might be "exempted from all

all danger and arrest by reason of my debts:" a favor which he seems to have obtained. Like most spendthrifts, Stucley was generous with money and was always a popular captain and master. He is reported to have gained the love of his followers by bountiful largesses, and he did not forget his kin in the days of his good fortune. No project was too great or too mad for his undertaking, and his genuine knowledge of war, his success in the management of men, his daring and true bravery in action, raised him into heroic stature on the field of battle or in the intricacies of a campaign. Stucley was not only a spendthrift and a soldier of fortune, he was likewise a most egregious braggart, boasting of his large estate, of his intimacy with princes, his own prowess, his magnificence. It must have been a sight long to be remembered to see Stucley ruffling it at Court with a gorgeous retinue, sufficient in number and costliness of

of attire to wait upon an earl. His arrogance was such that, taken with his notorious dare-devil courage, few men cared to cross his path. A characteristic story is related of Stucley, come to take leave of the Queen on the eve of his departure on an expedition the object of which was a much vaunted conquest of Florida. Rallying him on his grand manners and great importance, her Majesty finally "demanded him pleasantly whether he would remember her when settled in his kingdom. 'Yes,' saith he, 'and write unto you also.' 'And what style wilt thou use?' 'To my loving sister, as one prince writes unto another,'" was the ready retort.

This story, with the remarkable freedom of Stucley's intercourse with princes, their evident consideration of him, and the many favors which he seems only to have had to ask to receive at their hands, led to the surmise that Stucley may have been related to

to Henry the Eighth, as Falconbridge was related to Richard Cœur de Lion in Shakespeare's *King John*. The mere rumor of such a thing would account for Stucley's welcome to foreign courts, his arrogance and his popularity. It is but fair to state, however, that, swaggerer and braggart that Stucley was, he never claimed royal blood, nor did his enemies ever attaint his birth. Before he was cold in his grave he had become one of the heroes of popular folk-lore, celebrated in ballads and represented on the stage. Whence it happens that many of the facts of his life have been grossly distorted by a kind of romantic refraction.

Amongst the various means which Stucley practised to recoup his periodically battered fortunes was the usual one of a rich marriage. His enemies reported that he made more than one such, and we learn that, in accord with the businesslike methods which attended the arrangement of

of such matters in his age, Stucley appears more than once a party to such negotiations. When well on in his career he contrived to marry the young granddaughter and heiress of Alderman Sir Thomas Curtis. "By this marriage," we are told, "he got so good an estate as might have qualified a moderate mind to have lived bountifully and in great esteem, equal to the chief of his house." As it was, the unhappy girl's fortune was dissipated in a few months. The anonymous author of the play entitled *Sir Thomas Stucley* makes this marriage the starting-point of the adventures of his hero, and gives us a clear presentation of a determined and infatuated girl overcoming the reluctance of her prudent parents to yield a consent to her marriage with a young gallant whom they distrust but can learn little about. Married, and his wife's dower and jewels in his hands, the Stucley of the play in a capital scene pays his thronging,

thronging, cringing creditors, equips a company of soldiers for his sovereign's service, and declares to his weeping wife:

> It is not chambering,
> Now I have beauty to be dallying with,
> Nor pampering of myself, . . .
> Now I have got a little worldly pelf,
> That is the end or levels of my thought.
> I must have honor; honor is the thing
> Stucley doth thirst for, and to climb the mount
> Where she is seated; gold shall be my footstool.

The connection of these events belongs to the higher logic which dominates the doings of the drama. As to their actual sequence we have no knowledge, so intricate and so interwoven were all the projects and doings of this active and enterprising adventurer. Stucley appears to have been one of the first who succeeded in gaining Queen Elizabeth's participancy in the profitable trade of buccaneering. It was as early as 1563 that he formed the design of peopling

peopling Florida. "Stucley [was one]," says Fuller, "whose spirit was of so high a strain that it vilified subjection (though in the highest and chiefest degree) as contemptible, aiming as high as the moon, at not less than sovereignty."

On the high seas with "five good ships and a pinnace, with 2000 weight of corn-powder, and 100 curriers . . . besides artillery to the value of £120," Stucley forgot all about Florida and spent his time, much to his content, in preying upon French and Spanish commerce, although England was at the moment ostensibly at peace with both countries. Sir Thomas Chaloner, Elizabeth's ambassador, wrote to Cecil from Madrid: "Stucley's piracies are much railed at here on all parts. I hang down my head with shame enough. Alas, though it cost the Queen roundly, let him for honor's sake be fetched in. These pardons to such folks as be *hostes humani generis* I like not."

Whether

Whether it was "for honor's sake," or because the royal share in the profits was not sufficiently large, Elizabeth gave Sir Peter Carew, one of Stucley's numerous cousins, a commission to apprehend all pirates in the Irish seas. Sir Peter found one hulk of Stucley's in Cork harbor, and confiscated it. He also managed a little skirmish with a party of pirates who had fortified themselves in a castle, but was repulsed. Stucley having arranged to have his latest victim, a Flemish merchant, affirm before the mayor of Kinsale that "he had compounded frankly and freely with Stucley, without any compulsion or fear," that gentleman was not further molested, though he never succeeded thereafter in regaining the favor of his Queen. Perhaps Stucley's promises were in too great disparity contrasted with his achievements. A compassionate regard for failure was not amongst the virtues of Elizabeth; and Stucley, judged by the later

later golden standards of Hawkins and Drake, was for the nonce an unsuccessful buccaneer.

Prior to the undertaking of these naval adventures, Stucley had contrived to form an intimacy with the celebrated Shane O'Neill, who had come to the English Court with "a train of Kerns and Gallowglasses, clothed in linen kilts dyed with saffron." On his return Shane, writing to Elizabeth, declared: "Many of the nobles, magnates, and gentlemen of that kingdom [Scotland] treated me kindly and ingenuously, and namely one of your realm, Master Thomas Stucley, entertained me with his whole heart, and with all the favor he could. But I perceived that his whole intention, and the benevolence he showed me, tended to this — to show me the magnificence and the honor of your Majesty and your realm." If the unsophisticated Irish chief was right in the last surmise, we may feel

feel sure that Stucley was well paid for his pains. Stucley's acquaintance with Shane O'Neill, though he was a dangerous and successful enemy of the English in Ireland, seems to have proved valuable after the failure of his inroads upon the commerce of France and Spain. For we find Stucley soon after recommended by the Earls of Pembroke and Leicester, as well as by Cecil, to the service of Sir Henry Sidney, Deputy of Ireland, and employed by the last in several negotiations with Shane. Here again we must forbear to follow our clever adventurer too closely lest we become involved in that tangled labyrinth of treachery, bloodshed, injustice, and necessary and unnecessary tyranny which characterized the Tudor relations with Ireland. It appears that although Stucley gained the confidence and liking of Sidney, the latter was unable to obtain for him at the royal hands any post in the employ of the government such as seemed

seemed to Stucley at all commensurate with his talents. At length, apparently through a private feud, Stucley was committed a close prisoner to Dublin Castle, charged with using coarse language concerning the Queen and with levying war against her. It was then that he fell into the plot of the Catholic clergy and nobility of Ireland by which the crown of Ireland was to be offered to the brother of the King of Spain, Don John of Austria, and Ireland was to be separated forever from England. From this time forth the allegiance of Stucley was to the Roman Church, to Mary Stuart, and to Spain.

In Spain Stucley was well received, given large gifts of money, set up in a handsome establishment with thirty gentlemen to attend upon him, and the charges of all defrayed by the King. He was welcomed in due time to Court and splendidly entertained. He was knighted by Philip and inducted

inducted into the Spanish order of religious knights, that of Calatrava. Ever urging his plan for the conquest of Ireland, begging for ships to put to sea and prey upon English commerce, at jealousies with other renegades like himself, Stucley wore himself out, as did many a better man, in awaiting the decision and action of Philip, who continued leisurely to spin his toils unguided by advice and undeterred by the recurrent failure that comes to him that is ever too late. Amongst the Spaniards Stucley was popularly known as the "Duke of Ireland," and he was as loud in his boasts of his own importance as he was foul in the calumnies which he spread of Queen Elizabeth and her Court. Into the latter we need not enquire. When asked by the Spanish secretary, Çayas, to give a list of the lands, his possessions in Ireland, of which the Queen had deprived him, Stucley mentioned "The castle and town of Wexford,

ford, and the whole county; the abbey of Inniscorthy and that country of mosses, and seven or eight farms worth a thousand marks a year. The castle of Ferel and Kinsale belonging to it and the house of Lafylond and the Kavanagh country . . . the castle of Carlow and that whole county. The ancient kingdom of Leinster, for which he had paid twenty-two hundred pounds in one day, but which was taken from him because he was a Catholic and loved and commended the King of Spain." Upon another occasion he declared: "For my part I hate an Englishman as I hate a dog; for if ever I be betrayed, I shall be betrayed by them. But Ireland is the country that I and my child must stick to; for I must live by them and they by me. For there will I build a fair Abbey, and have in it twenty-four friars, and one of them to pray for me every hour of the day and night. And there will I be buried."

Wearied

Wearied with dancing attendance on the Spanish Court, Stucley sought and, after the usual delay, obtained a warrant with a laudatory recommendation from Philip, to go to Rome, where he was received with great honor by Pope Pius the Fifth. While in Rome Stucley held long consultations with the Pope on the state of religion, and offered among other things "to conquer Ireland with 3000 men and to burn the ships in the Thames, with a detachment of two ships and two armed zebras under one of his pilots."

But the Pope and Philip were otherwise busied at the moment, and Stucley was not the man to remain idle when fighting was to be had. It seems that Stucley was captain of three galleys under Don John at the battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571, and that he acquitted himself with his usual bravery in that celebrated defeat of the Turk. But though Stucley lost none of the Spanish

Spanish King's favor, the plot against Ireland failed and, with the death of Pius the Fifth, Philip was left to intrigue, vacillate, and postpone to his heart's content and to the perfect security of his enemies. In vain Stucley undertook to defend the narrow seas against the navies of Elizabeth, in vain he tried to instruct the Spaniards how "to frame their ships in our manner." Stucley was living like a prince at this time. A memorandum preserved at Madrid relates: "The King hath given to Thomas Stucley at times from his first coming into Spain in 1570 to this time of August 1574, and for keeping his house at Madrid . . . the whole sum of 27,576 ducats," a sum the purchasing value of which at that time must have represented nearly the same number of pounds sterling to-day. But Philip was not the only source of Stucley's revenues and honors. From a proclamation which he afterwards made it appears that Stucley

Stucley now flourished under the titles "Baron of Ross and Idron, Viscount of Morough and Kenshlagh, Earl of Wexford and Catherlough, Marquess of Leinster and General of our most Holy Father, Pope Gregory the Thirteenth." That Stucley was regarded by the English government as the head and front of all conspiracies is proved by the diligence with which his movements were reported to Cecil and Walsingham, and the frequency of his name in the reports of the time.

At length in 1578 an expedition under the command of Stucley was actually fitted out from Cività Vecchia, the purpose of which was to invade Ireland. Stucley sailed to Cadiz and thence to Lisbon, where he met King Sebastian of Portugal preparing for a Quixotic expedition into Africa. Sebastian was a religious zealot in whose heart the forgotten fires of the Crusades still burned. Surrounded by the incense and

and adulation of priests, he had come to believe in himself as "an ideal knight, chaste and strong," before whose victorious lance the infidel must fall. Unfortunately Sebastian as a military commander was incompetency itself. Sebastian's uncle, the astute King of Spain, recognized the situation in its true light, and when Sebastian undertook to interfere in a petty war amongst the Mahometans of Morocco, refused him assistance, although the Pope hallowed his banners and gave him the sanction and blessing of the Church. How Stucley could have been induced to take a part in so mad an expedition it is bootless to enquire. His chances of success in his long-cherished scheme for the invasion of Ireland were not promising, he had raised but a thousand of the five thousand men needed. Perhaps he joined Sebastian on the latter's promise to return his favor after the conquest of Morocco; perhaps Philip and the

the Pope were not sorry thus to rid themselves of a man who had become a considerable charge upon them both, and whom it was as dangerous to encourage as it was difficult to rebuff.

Contemporary report, tradition, ballads, and dramas are at some variance as to the precise circumstances of Stucley's death, some telling how he fell early in the day at the battle of Alcazar, others relating that he died by the treacherous hands of his own troop of Italian soldiers, in their despair that the battle was lost. All are agreed that he fell valiantly as became so notable a commander. Burghley thus wrote of Stucley after his death: "Of this man might be written whole volumes to paint out the life of a man in the highest degree of vainglory, prodigality, falsehood, and vile and filthy conversation of life, and altogether without faith, conscience, or religion. And yet this man was he whom the rebels . . .

and

and all other fugitives being conversant at Rome did hang all their hope upon to have their malicious purposes performed to the ruin of the Queen their sovereign and their native country. But the end thereof fell out by God's ordinance, as by this traitor neither her Majesty nor her subjects received any damage, neither yet could any person in England or Ireland become owner of one foot of land by his death. Neither dukedoms, marquisates or lordships was it possible for her Majesty to benefit any person with the forfeitures thereof. But if his death did profit any, it was to the King of Spain and the Pope, by determination of their pensions, although it was credibly reported that the King of Spain, by advice of some of his wise counsellors, had discharged him of all pensions and entertainments and gave him passage to Rome."

IV

AN OLD-TIME FRIENDSHIP

IV

An Old-Time Friendship

In Saint Mary's, the ancient collegiate church of the town of Warwick, in a room once the chapter-house of the dean and canons, and apart from the sepulchral pomp and recumbent imagery of Beauchamp Chapel, there is a single tomb of black and white marble, somewhat sombre and hearse-like in appearance, although of a befitting dignity. On it lies a sword, now rusted into two pieces, and a helmet, dust covered and fallen away with age. This tomb was planned and completed under the direction of its occupant in his lifetime; for he was then the owner of Warwick

Warwick Castle and of the neighboring demesne. On a ledge of the table-like lower part of this tomb and running about it is this inscription:

FVLKE GREVILL
SERVANT TO QUEENE ELIZABETH
CONCELLER TO KING JAMES
FREND TO SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
TROPHAEUM PECCATI

Born four years before Elizabeth ascended the throne, entered at Shrewsbury School with Philip Sidney in the year of the birth of Shakespeare, Greville lived on into the reign of King Charles, and befriended the youthful Davenant, an older contemporary of Dryden. Greville's was a remarkable range of life. Scarcely less remarkable, too, were his relations with two of the four sovereigns under whom he lived, his friendships among "great ones," and his patronage of the learned. Greville in his youth had

Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke

had travelled, like Sidney, with the reformer Languet; he had entertained that rare spirit Giordano Bruno at his own table; and conversed on terms of equality with William the Silent upon the political state of Europe. In the reign of James, Greville was created a baron under title of Lord Brooke of Beauchamp Court, and served the state as a privy councillor and as Chancellor of the Exchequer. But his greatest glory was under Elizabeth, who appears to have treated him exceedingly well, despite the description of her as a monarch who "was never profuse in the delivering out of her treasure, but paid many and most of her servants part in money and the rest with grace . . . leaving the arrear of recompence due to their merit to her great successor." Sir Robert Naunton, who wrote these words in an entertaining and gossipy book entitled *Fragmenta Regalia or Observations on the late Queen Elizabeth, her Times and Favorites*, declares: "Sir Fulke Greville

Greville had no mean place in her favor, neither did he hold it for any short term; for if I be not deceived, he had the longest lease and the smoothest time without rub of any of her favorites." Elsewhere the same authority informs us: "Sir Fulke Greville had much and private access to Queen Elizabeth, which he used honorably, and did many men good."

The few that remember the name of Greville or connect that name in any wise with literature may recall the clever note which Charles Lamb appended to his selections from Greville's extraordinary dramas *Alaham* and *Mustapha*. "These two tragedies of Lord Brooke might with more propriety have been termed political treatises, than plays. Their author has strangely contrived to make passion, character and interest of the highest order subservient to the expression of state dogma and mysteries. He is nine parts Machiavel and Tacitus, for

for one part Sophocles or Seneca. In this writer's estimate of the faculties of his own mind, the understanding must have held a most tyrannical preëminence. Whether we look into his plays or his most passionate love-poems, we shall find all frozen and made frigid with intellect. The finest movements of the human heart, the utmost grandeur of which the soul is capable, are essentially comprised in the actions and speeches of Cælica and Camena. Shakespeare, who seems to have had a peculiar delight in contemplating womanly perfection, whom for his many sweet images of female excellence all women are in an especial manner bound to love, has not raised the *ideal* of the female character higher than Lord Brooke in these two women has done. But it requires a study equivalent to the learning of a new language to understand their meaning when they speak." Just though all this is, there is another light by

by which to view this interesting man, by which he appears not wholly "a being of pure intellect," but as one in whom a warm and enthusiastic youthful friendship, idealized by the flight of years, seems to have come to fill the place of those nearer family ties in which the majority of men find their pleasure and solace.

The friendships of literature are of deep interest, whether the twin stars shine with independent brightness, revolve one about the other like a satellite about its planet as did Boswell about his Johnson, or come to be resolved by the telescope of critical scholarship into a constellation of luminaries as the writers of the group of plays still described as those of Beaumont and Fletcher. Not less interesting is the capacity for worship than the hero whose deeds and perfections inspire adoration. A capacity for worship implies an intuitive recognition of worth, forgetfulness of self, and an aspiring

aspiring ideality of mind, which the hero is apt to fall far short in.

Among the literary remains of Fulke Greville, which comprise, besides the dramas just mentioned, several difficult treatises in verse on government and some love poetry of rare and peculiar excellence, is *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney*. This *Life* is not so much a biography as a eulogy, combining an "account of [Sidney's] principal actions, counsels, designs and death." The work was intended by the author to form an introduction to his other writings, and digresses into reminiscence of "the maxims and policies used by Queen Elizabeth in her government" and into her relations with other states. The literary activities of a Chancellor of the Exchequer in the days of King James were not without their lets and hindrances. Greville had proposed soon after Elizabeth's death to write a full account of her reign, and few men

men could have been found better fitted for the task. But applying to Secretary Cecil for "his favor to peruse all obsolete records of the council-chest from those times to these as he in his wisdom should think fit," he was first cordially received, though at last put off with the excuse that Cecil "durst not presume to let the council-chest lie open to any man living without his Majesty's knowledge and approbation." This answer was doubtless inevitable on Cecil's hearing Greville's affirmation that he "conceived a historian was bound to tell nothing but the truth." There is something touching in the sight of this gray-haired man of the world sitting down to express in the studied eloquence of old age the images of "this unmatchable Queen and woman," as he calls Elizabeth, and of his boyhood's friendship with Sidney, the paragon of a fresher age.

In Greville's own words: "The difference

ence which I have found between times, and consequently the changes of life into which their natural vicissitudes do violently carry men, as they have made deep furrows of impression into my heart, so the same heavy wheels caused me to retire my thoughts from free traffic with the world, and rather seek comfortable ease or employment in the safe memory of dead men, than disquiet in a doubtful conversation amongst the living. Which I ingenuously confess to be one chief motive of dedicating these exercises of my youth to that worthy, Sir Philip Sidney, so long since departed." Deep affection amounting almost to veneration for the memory of his friend breathes in these pages. "Though I lived with him and knew him from a child," he says, in one place, "yet I never knew him other than a man: with such steadfastness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years.

years. His talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind: so as even his teachers found something in him to observe and learn, above that which they had read or taught." Elsewhere he summarizes the best in Sidney in these words: "His very ways in the world did generally add reputation to his Prince and country, by restoring amongst us the ancient majesty of noble and true dealing; as a manly wisdom that can no more be weighed down by any effeminate craft, than Hercules could be overcome by that contemptible army of dwarfs. And this was it which, I profess, I loved dearly in him, and still shall be glad to honor in the good men of this time: I mean that his heart and tongue went both one way, and so with every one that went with the truth; as knowing no other kindred, party or end. Above all, he made the religion he professed the firm basis of his life." It was with

with such an ideal as this before him that Greville wrote of his youth's friendship, and it is this sweet but dignified adoration of a man who truly merited the mourning and remembrance of a nation, that has given an imperishable value to this work.

In the youth of Sidney and Greville, the graces of chivalry still lingered. Men had come to recognize that in war the age of personal prowess was a thing of the past, and that gunpowder had reduced the man-at-arms in his panoply of armor to an anachronism. At Court, however, tilting continued to form part of "shews" and ceremonials; and, on each return of the Queen's coronation day, a champion, mounted and in full armor, appeared in the lists, the heralds announcing his challenge to defend and uphold the title and right of "Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland and of Virginia." Sidney and Greville were both notable

notable knights, and at Whitsuntide, 1581, were among the chief challengers in a tourney given in honor of the commissioners from the French King, sent to negotiate Elizabeth's marriage with the Duke of Anjou. From a contemporary account of these events, we have the following description: "Then proceeded Master Philip Sidney in very sumptuous manner, with armor part blue and the rest gilt and engraven: with four spare horses having caparisons and furniture very rich and costly, as some of cloth of gold embroidered with pearl . . . very richly and cunningly wrought. He had four pages that rode on his four spare horses, who had cassock hats and Venetian hose all of cloth of silver laid with gold lace, and hats of the same with gold bands and white feathers. . . . Then had he thirty gentlemen and yeomen and four trumpeters, who were all in cassock coats and Venetian hose of yellow velvet laid with silver

silver lace, yellow caps with silver bands and white feathers. . . . Then came Master Fulke Greville in gilt armor with rich caparisons and furniture, having four spare horses with four pages upon them, and four trumpeters sounding before him, and a twenty gentlemen and yeomen attending upon him." There follows a minute description of the hose, caps, and feathers of Greville's attendants, which the reader may be spared. Suffice it to tell that the challengers were successful, and Sidney, his friend beside him, in the presence of his Queen and of his beloved, must have passed in that day one of the happiest of his life. Here is a sonnet that Sidney has left us on this occasion:

> Having this day, my horse, my hand, my lance
> Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
> Both by the judgement of the *English* eyes;
> And of some sent by that sweet enemie, *France*,
> Horsemen, my skill in horsemanship advance:
> Towne-folkes,

Towne-folkes, my strength; a daintier Judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I doe take
My bloud from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of armes did make.
How farre they shot awry? The true cause is,
Stella lookt on; and from her heav'nly face
Sent forth the beames which made so faire my race.

Young men such as these could not remain content with the shows of war at home. Both strained to get away to actual battle and adventure, and were only restrained by the imperative mandates of the Queen, who cared not to risk in unnecessary perils the lives of those she loved to have about her. Sidney especially was deeply interested in the discoveries and adventuring of the time. Not only were books of poetry, like *The Shepheardes Kalender*, dedicated to him, but the first edition of his school-friend's, Richard Hakluyt's, *Voyages* as well. Sidney had ventured a share in Frobisher's

Frobisher's voyage of 1575; had sat, while a member of Parliament for Kent, in a committee intrusted with a definition of the elastic boundaries of Virginia; and had narrowly missed going with Sir Humphrey Gilbert on the ill-fated voyage that cost England that brave seaman. An interesting part of Greville's *Life* of his friend details how the two young men slipped away from Court, Sidney finding an errand of state to Plymouth, there to effect, if possible, a junction with Sir Francis Drake and to sail with him on his famous expedition against the colonies of Spain. Sir Francis seems to have been not a little concerned at the prospect of having two such prominent young courtiers aboard his ship; and was, it is likely, not unaware of the manner in which their purpose reached the ear of the Queen. Elizabeth's attitude towards the refractoriness of her young courtiers in breaking away from her pampering and tyrannical favor

favor is well illustrated in the words which she is reported to have addressed to young Lord Mountjoy, who had "twice or thrice stole away into Brittany . . . without the Queen's leave or privity." When he had come into her presence, "she fell into a kind of railing, demanding how he durst go. . . . 'Serve me so,' quoth she, 'once more, and I will lay you fast enough for running; you will never leave till you are knocked on the head, as that inconsiderate fellow Sidney was; you shall go when I send. In the mean time see that you lodge in the Court . . . where you may follow your book, read, and discourse of the wars.'" Well may Greville exclaim, after relating his own staying on a similar occasion: "Wherein whatsoever I felt, yet I appeal to the judicious reader, whether there be latitude left — more than humble obedience — in these nice cases between duty and selfness, in a sovereign's service?"

When

When Sidney and Greville were boys there was little promise of the great literature that was about to burst forth in England. Chaucer was still read, it is true, and all were agreed in calling him the Homer of English poetry. But the jingling satire of Skelton and the rude genre farce of John Heywood had been succeeded in the popular esteem by the lugubrious complaints of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, in which historical victim after victim of the fatal turn of Fortune's wheel returns from his appointed place of torture to rehearse in long-paced metre and with wearisome alliteration the miseries of his fall, and to warn the reader of the probable coming of a like fate. Even the songs and popular lyrics partook of this dolefulness of subject and inevitable mannerism of style. The collection known as *Tottel's Miscellany*, which contained the best lyrical poetry of the time of Henry the Eighth and his son, had indeed been made, and

and had run through six editions before Sidney came of age; but the best work of Wyatt and Surrey, contributed to this collection, remained unequalled, if we except the promise of something better in the original work of Gascoigne and in scattered poems by some few others.

But despite all this, there was a general interest in literature such as had never existed before in England. By the year 1574, Sidney and Greville had left Shrewsbury and were at Oxford and Cambridge respectively, though still in frequent communication with each other. A year later Lyly, Peele, and Watson were at Oxford, while her sister University held Harvey, Spenser, Lodge, and Greene. These are some of the names that achieved literary celebrity, but every young man of promise was writing, translating, poetizing, theorizing about literature. Poetry, philosophy, history, the drama, rhetoric, and versification

tion were the chief topics to which this activity was addressed, and beside the set treatises in which these matters were avowedly discussed, there was scarcely a preface or a pamphlet, on whatever ostensible subject, which did not enter into a consideration of these questions of the day.

It was in the midst of such conditions as these that young Philip Sidney founded what Gabriel Harvey called the Areopagus. There is a pastoral poem extant, "made by Sir Philip Sidney upon his meeting with his two worthy friends and fellow-poets, Sir Edward Dyer and Master Fulke Greville." A stanza or two will show their relation :

Joyne, mates, in mirth with me,
Graunt pleasure to our meeting ;
Let Pan, our good god, see
How gratefull is our greeting.
Joyne hearts and hands, so let it be ;
Make but one minde in bodies three.

Ye hymnes and singing skill,
Of God Apolloe's giving,

Be

Be prest our reedes to fill
With sound of musicke living,
Joyne hearts and hands, so let it be;
Make but one minde in bodies three.

. . . . . .

Now joynèd be our hands,
Let them be ne'r a sunder,
But linkt in binding bands
By metamorphoz'd wonder.
So should our sever'd bodies three
As one for ever joynèd be.

This "happy, blessed trinity," as it is called in another stanza, was the heart of the Areopagus. About these were clustered a chosen few, deeply interested in poetry and in theories about it. Edmund Spenser, then newly come to Court, could not have failed to be drawn into such a brotherhood. Gabriel Harvey, a somewhat pragmatical Cambridge don, surveyed the proceedings from afar, and penned jocular or censorius letters to Spenser on the subjects discussed, all of which letters he carefully preserved in

in copy and printed with some of Spenser's a few years later, for general edification and the particular aggrandizement of Gabriel's own importance. It is unlikely that there was anything in the nature of a formal association among these young men. They were all interested in poetry, and each of them — even Harvey in Latin — was a "practitioner" of it. The most important question of the day was the possibility of a future for English literature. It must be remembered that at the date of the Areopagus, in the late seventies and early eighties, not a play of Marlowe, Shakespeare, or Jonson had been written; that Bacon was a promising lad occasionally at Court with his father, dubbed by the Queen for his clever answers her "little Lord Chancellor," and that the *Faerie Queene* was in the making, but not yet known to any save Harvey, who seems to have set little store by it. To be satisfied with Surrey or Gascoigne, recently

recently dead and accounted "the chief of our late rhymers," was out of the question. The Italians had done better than this. But even the Italians had not equalled the ancients, who, in place of the rational admiration which the literatures of Greece and Rome must ever inspire in the man who will be at the pains to know them, were adored by these Latin-taught young men with a superstitious reverence that seems to have lingered in the ferules of their schoolmasters from the Middle Ages and to have been imparted, like much of the education of the time, *non sine lacrimis*. It was thus that the question of a possible future for English literature was narrowed into an endeavor to foist classical metres upon English verse, and English hexameters, alcaics, sapphics, and asclepiads became the popular metrical experiments of the day.

Spenser appears to have toyed with these experiments;

experiments; for all this while he was seriously at work on the *Faerie Queene*. In a letter to Harvey, Spenser is merry on the subject, likening certain words, to the customary accent of which the new versification did violence, to "a lame gosling that draweth one leg after the other," and concluding with an irony which may not have been altogether appreciated by Harvey: "But it must be won with custom, and rough words must be subdued with use. For why, a God's name, may not we, as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language?" Not such was the attitude of Sidney, who felt that the question was not to be solved except by extensive and serious experiment. With an enthusiasm and diligence which is amazing in view of his social and political activity, Sidney set himself to the study of this problem and to the demonstration of its success or failure. From the minute details of the rules of classical

classical prosody to the grasp and assimilation of the æsthetic theories of Aristotle, all was the subject of Sidney's attention. Widening the field to include a consideration of his contemporaries, French, Spanish, or Italian, he set himself to transplant into England whatever might beautify and enrich her literature, and accomplished what his short life permitted — his rapturous sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella*, his romantic pastoral, *Arcadia*, and his noble *Defence of Poesie* — not in the spirit of abject imitation, but with that free play of the imagination and original poetic instinct which are his distinguishing characteristics. The shadows and black clouds of disfavor which Elizabeth permitted at times to sweep across the blessed light of the royal favor were not without their advantages to her disconsolate courtiers. It was in a period of eclipse such as this, the result of his bold letter to the Queen arguing against her

her marriage with the Duke of Anjou, that Sidney found the leisure for the writing of his *Arcadia* and for carrying on the experiments just mentioned. It was Sidney's use of classical and Italian forms of poetry, his writing of sonnets, pastorals, his employment of "conceit" and a flowery, poetical diction, that gave sanction and currency to all these things. They would have existed without him, for they were in the air, the very perfume of the time; but it was something for English poetry to have had the budding of this blossoming spring at the hands of this sane and gracious poet, this noble, sound-hearted man.

V

"AN AERY OF CHILDREN LITTLE EYASES"

V

"An Aery of Children Little Eyases"

THERE is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for 't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

"What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players

players — as it is most like, if their means are no better — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

"'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

"Is 't possible?

"Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.

"Do the boys carry it away?

"Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too."

From this well-known passage of *Hamlet* it appears that a certain company of boy actors, who are likened for their forwardness to a nest-full of fledgling hawks, are in great popularity for their high-pitched eloquence and for the satirical intent of their

their plays. There was controversy between them and other companies, and the town did not hesitate to set them ("tarre them") like dogs upon each other, and to grant that the boys, who apparently looked down upon their opponents' theatres as "common stages," had the better of the argument.

In the London of Spenser's boyhood there was not a single theatre, and Elizabeth ruled nearly twenty years before the first playhouses were erected. The yards of several inns, it is true, were used for bear-baiting, cock-fighting, or theatrical exhibitions, as the case might be; and several companies of strolling actors gained a precarious living in and about London under the ostensible patronage of certain nobles. The crudity of their performances was the laughing-stock of the courtiers, and many were the jokes which were cracked at the expense of the English playwright, of whom it was said that "in three hours runs

runs he through the world . . . makes children men, men to conquer kingdoms, murder monsters, bringeth gods from heaven and devils from hell." At Court, at the Universities, and in the societies of the Inns of Court, another species of drama flourished, and with it another species of actor. Here was the domain of cultivated life and the sanction of classical study; and the actors, when not courtiers themselves or the gentlemen of the Inner or Middle Temple or of Gray's Inn, were the well-trained boys of her Majesty's Chapel or of the choir of the Cathedral of St. Paul's. Into what depths of antiquity the training of English choir-boys for theatrical performances extends, it would be difficult to determine. Considering the customary performance of miracles and moralities by craft-guilds as well as clericals and the frequent acting of plays of Plautus and Terence in Latin at the Universities in the Middle Ages, the

the practice must have been of very early origin. If the choir-boy was not the earliest actor, the choir-master was certainly among the earliest playwrights. The duties of Richard Edwards, Doctor of Music and Master of her Majesty's Chapel, must have been multifarious. For not only did he train and lead his choir and accompany them on the organ; it was his duty also to compose new sacred music and secular songs, to devise pageants and "shews," to write plays and to teach his young charges how to act them to the "contentation" of the Queen.

In the fragmentary and disjointed records of the office of the Queen's Revels, the function of which was to furnish entertainment to the Court on holidays and high days, are many entries of payments for actors, for properties, and services, appertaining to the presentations of masques and plays before the Queen. Among them, the mention

mention of the Children of Paul's, of Windsor, of Westminster, and of her Majesty's Chapel are not infrequent, and many payments are recorded to their Masters. This is the usual form: "Payde upon the councell's warraunt dated at Westminster the ninth daye of March 1561 to Sebastyan Westcot, Master of the children of Polls for an Enterlude played before the Queen's Majesty vj^{li} xiij^{s} iiij^{d}." Some entries suggest the nature of the performance. Thus a furrier was paid for "ten dosen of Kydd's skinnes together with the woorkmanship by him and his servaunts doone upon the Hobby horses that served the children of Westminster in the Triumphe, where parris [Paris] wan the Christall sheeld for vienna at the turneye and barryers;" and the history of "cipio [Scipio] Africanus showen at whitehall the sondaye night after newe yeares daie [was] enacted by the children of Pawles furnished in this Offyce

Offyce with sondrey garments and triumphant ensignes and banners newe made and their head-pieces of white sarcenett, scarfes and garters etc." From a series of entries intended to convey no more than the information of certain extra charges and the reasons for them, a momentary glimpse of the life of these little actors may be obtained. These entries shall tell their own story:

"Item, for the diets and lodging of divers children at saint Jones whiles thay Learned theier parts and jestures meet for the Mask in which ix of them did serve at Hampton Coorte xxxiij^{s} iiij^{d}.

"To Bruton of Powles wharfe for a Bardge and vj ores [oars] with ij Tylt Whirreyes that carryed the Masking geare and Children with theier tutors and an Italian Woman the which to dresse theier heads as also the Taylers, property makers and haberdashers xxiiij^{s}.

"To

"To William Skarboro for ffyer and vittels for the Children and theier attendants whiles thay wayted to know whether her Majesty would have the Maske that nighte ix^{s} vj^{d}.

"For trymmyng the Children on Shrovetuisdaye xij^{d}.

"To Mother sparo for the lodgings with ffyer and ffoode that nighte and in the Morning whiles they staied for botes [boats at Kingston] xij^{d}.

"To Thomas Totnall for ffyer and vittells for the Children when they landed, sum of them being sick and colde and hungry v^{s} vj^{d}."

Let us hope that Mother Sparrow was kind to her little charges, and that Thomas Totnall, furnishing fire and victuals, did not skimp the weary little fellows in their comforts.

That abuses should have arisen in this traffic was to be expected. In the early years

years of Elizabeth's reign there was only an occasional use of schoolboys or choir-boys for performances at Court. But while the boys of Westminster School and the Merchant Tailors' continued occasional and amateur performers, the Children of the Chapel and those of St. Paul's were soon formed into regularly organized professional companies each with its place of popular performance in the city, either the singing-school or a theatre constructed for them. The excuse for the earlier popular theatrical representations of the day was that of practice for the Queen's entertainment, for without the direct patronage of the Court no company could long maintain itself. The choir-master, thus converted into a theatrical manager, added an eager pursuit of popular favor to his former duty as a purveyor of entertainment to the Court. In 1597 letters patent were issued under the great seal authorizing Nathaniel Gyles, then Master

Master of the Chapel, and his deputies "to take such children as he . . . should thinke meete, in cathedrall, collegiate, parish churches or chappells" for the better service of her Majesty's Chapel. This power Gyles abused by taking likely and clever lads from their schools and even apprentices from their masters, "being children noe way able or fitt for singing, nor by anie the sayd confederates endeavoured to be taught to singe," and employing them, as the petition proceeds to set forth, for the manager's "owne corrupte gayne and lucre, to errecte, sett upp, furnish and maynteyne a play house or place in the Blackfryers within your Majesties cytie of London, and to the end they mighte the better furnish theire sayd playes and enterludes with childeren whome they thought moste fittest to acte and furnish the said playes."

Relieved of its legal verbiage, this complaint proceeds to relate how one Thomas Clifton,

Clifton, a gentleman's son of some thirteen years of age, had been kidnapped on his way to school and brought to the playhouse in Blackfriars "amongst a companie of lewde and dissolute mercenary players," how the boy was given, "in most scornfull disdaynfull and dispightful manner, a scroll of paper conteyning parte of one of theire playes and . . . commaunded to learne the same by harte," and told that if he did not obey "he should be surely whipped." To the father of young Clifton, who sought his son at the theatre, Gyles was exceedingly abusive, not only refusing to release the boy, but declaring that "if the Queene . . . would not beare them furth in that accion, she should gett another to execute her commission for them" [that is, as far as they were concerned]; and replying to Clifton's objection that "it was not fitt that a gentleman of his sorte should have his sonne and heire to be so basely used," that

that "they had aucthoritie sufficient soe to take any noble mans sonne in this land, and did then and there use theis speeches, that were it not for the benefitt they made by the sayd play house, whoe would, should serve the Cappell with childeren for them." Indeed it was not until the matter was brought to the attention of the Queen's privy council that a warrant was at last issued compelling Gyles to release some of the boys, and the upshot of the whole matter was a censure by the Star Chamber by which all "assurances made to him concerning the said house or plays" were declared utterly void.

Of the seven boys named in the complaint as thus violently inducted into the theatrical profession, two at least remained in it. These were the notable actor and playwright, Nathaniel Field, and little Salathiel Pavey, who achieved reputation as an actor before his death at the early age of thirteen.

By

By the irony of fate, Field was the son of a preacher who wrote in 1581 a letter to the Earl of Leicester "adjuring him not to encourage those wickednesses and abuses that are wont to be nourished by those impure interludes and plays." On an accident at one of the theatres, in which several persons were hurt, the same zealous man published a pamphlet beginning: "*A Godly Exhortation* by occasion of the late judgment of God shewed at Paris Garden," and ending: "given to all estates for their instruction, concerning the keeping of the Sabbath day, by John Field Minister of the Word of God." John Field died whilst Nathaniel was still an infant, and was thus spared much unhappiness. When Nathaniel was carried off by Gyles he was a scholar at Westminster School and could have been little over twelve or thirteen years of age. In 1600 and the next year, Field was the chief actor in Jonson's difficult satirical plays,

plays, *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*. Several years later he took the title-rôle in *Epicœne or the Silent Woman*. In this play the perplexities of identification reach the highest point as the silent woman in the fifth act is suddenly metamorphosed into a noisy boy, and the actor must thus pretend to be that which he is not, to delude his auditors into believing him not to be that which he is. Field was a kind of protégé of Jonson's, who related years after that the boy was his scholar and had read to him the satires of Horace and some epigrams of Martial. It is pleasant to contemplate the picture thus presented to us of the fatherless boy, stolen away from his mother and deprived of his schooling, gaining so powerful a friend as the great dramatist and dictator, with the latter's attempt to supply in part the boy's interrupted education. Salathiel Pavey was also among the actors of the earlier two plays just mentioned, but suffered

suffered an untimely fate. As appears from the verses below, this child was renowned for his ability to play the parts of old men, and must have been deeply beloved by Jonson to have been so embalmed, fleeting little creature that he was, in the clear amber of the following fine epitaph:

Weep with me, all you that read
This little story:
And know, for whom a teare you shed,
Death's selfe is sorry.
'T was a child, that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As *Heaven* and *Nature* seem'd to strive
Which own'd the creature.
Yeares he numbred scarce thirteene
When *Fates* turn'd cruell,
Yet three fill'd *Zodiacs* had he been
The Stage's jewell;
And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duely,
As, sooth, the *Parcæ* thought him one,
He plai'd so truely.
So, by error to his fate
They all consented;

But

But viewing him since (alas, too late!)
They have repented;
And have sought, to give new birth,
In bathes to steep him;
But, being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vowes to keep him.

An examination of the repertoire of these boy companies discloses the fact that they performed for the most part plays of a satirical and allegorical intent: Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, in which the apple of Ate is taken from Venus and reawarded to the peerless nymph and queen, Eliza; Lyly's *Endimion*, in which is figured forth in elaborate allegory the vain love of Leicester for Cynthia, that changeful, brilliant luminary and queen of night; *Cynthia's Revels* and the *Poetaster*, in which the gilded life of courtiers and the foibles and jealousies of the poets are respectively satirized. Widely contrasted were such plays with the stirring dramas of Marlowe and Shakespeare with which

which the popular stages were ringing, in which the characters were no mere witty caricatures of the follies that disported their velvets and plumes at Court or in Paul's Walk, the hero no dainty Euphuist apostrophizing the moon in measured cadence and with ingenious simile, but merry Prince Hal with his escapades in the free life of Cheapside, his blunt courtship of the coy Princess of France, and the valor, the undertone of religious feeling, and the innate manliness, that made Henry the Fifth the popular English hero.

Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign the boy companies made a strong effort to obtain the favorable suffrage of the public. They were notoriously active in what was known as the "war of the theatres," in which the dramatists carried on a seemingly internecine conflict by means of a satirical representation of each other on the stage. They procured, too, the services of some

some of the greatest playwrights of the age, so that Chapman, Marston, and Jonson all wrote for them for a time. It is not to be doubted that to all this Shakespeare alludes in the passage from *Hamlet* quoted above. We have here the deliberate judgment of a noble and successful rival on the unusual efforts of the boy companies to curry popular favor. It is in the kindly and humorsome vein that we might expect of the master-poet, whose only criticism is contained in the hint that at some time the boys might come to feel that their playwrights had "done them wrong" in thus setting them in opposition to that profession in which most of them were likely to continue as men.

Some of the contemporary dramas utilized the circumstance that boys were the actors to present us bits of realistic painting of the manners of the time. Thus in Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a satirical parody of the absurdity of the romantic adventures often

often put on the stage, the prologue is spoken by a boy who is easily induced with a couple of shillings to permit an apprentice to be poked into the play and to assume willy-nilly the rôle of hero throughout.

In the *Return from Parnassus* the prologue is begun by a boy who breaks down after "Spectators we will act a comedy." Whereupon the stage-keeper tries to prompt him, but has not the matter in his book; so he scolds the lad and lets out the reason of his forgetfulness:

"You would be whipt, you raskall: you must be sitting up all night at cardes, when you should be conning your part."

"Its all long of you," sobs the boy, "I could not get my part a night or two before, that I might sleepe on it."

The stage direction concludes: "the stage-keeper carrieth the boy away under his arme." Sobs, struggles, and well-directed kicking we may imagine for ourselves.

Cynthia's

Cynthia's Revels opens with a lively contention between three of "the children" as to which is to speak the prologue. They decide the matter by drawing lots, and the two unsuccessful claimants amuse themselves by badgering the speaker and trying to put him out of his part. After this, all fall to mimicking the auditors that are accustomed to sit on the stage, cutting precisely the antics which we might expect of a parcel of lively urchins under such circumstances, and employing an asseveration, "Would I were whipped!" only too appropriate, we may fear, to the method of their training. Here is a bit of their mimicry. The dashes, in Jonson's orthography, denote the airy whiffs of the young mimic as he smokes or — as they then styled it — "drinks" and exhales his "tabacco."

"Now, sir, suppose I am one of your gentile auditors, that am come in (having paid

paid my money at the doore, with much adoe) and here I take my place, and sit downe: I have my three sorts of tabacco in my pocket, my light by me, and thus I begin. 'By this light, I wonder that any man is so mad, to come to see these rascally tits play here — they do act like so many wrens . . . — not the fifth part of a good face amongst them all. — And then their musick is abominable — able to stretch a man's ears worse than ten — pillories, and their ditties — most lamentable things, like the pitifull fellows that make them — poets. By this vapour [and we may be sure that the little rogue puffed out his smoke with great unction], an 't were not for tabacco — I think — the very [smell] of hem would poison mee, I should not dare to come in at their gates. A man were better visit fifteen jayls, — or a dozen or two hospitals — than once adventure to come near them.' How is 't? Well?

"Excellent:

"Excellent: give me my cloake [the badge of the speaker of the prologue].

"Stay; you shall see me doe another now; but a more sober, or better-gather'd gallant; that is (as it may be thought) some friend or well-wisher to the house: And here I enter.

"What? upon the stage, too?

"Yes: and I step forth like one of the children, and aske you, 'Would you have a stoole, sir?'

"'A stoole, boy?'

"'Aye, sir, if you 'le give me six pence, I 'le fetch you one.'

"'For what I pray thee? what shall I doe with it?'

"'O lord, sir! will you betray your ignorance so much? Why throne your selfe in state on the stage, as other gentlemen use, sir.'

"'Awaye, wagge; what, wouldst thou make an implement of me? Slid the boy takes

takes mee for a peece of perspective (I hold my life), or some silke curtain.' "

We may feel sure that these sketches were not without their true originals in life, and perchance not always in need of the intervention of a poet for their presentation.

Women first appeared as actresses on the stage about the time of the Restoration, and in a few years the boy actor was a thing of the past. Francis Kynaston is reputed to have been the last male actor to appear in female parts. Kynaston was famed for his delicate beauty and it is of him that Cibber relates the story, that King Charles, coming earlier than was expected to the playhouse, became impatient that the play did not begin, until informed that the Queen was unhappily not yet shaven.

VI

A GROATSWORTH OF WIT

VI

A Groatsworth of Wit

LATE in the summer of 1593, a young man lay dying in low lodgings near Dowgate, "sore sick of a surfeit which he had taken with drinking." Degraded with sin, pinched with want, starving and dying in the street, except for the charity of a shoemaker's wife, almost a beggar like himself, he had reached the end of a short and wasted life, and now too late lay repentant in the agony of helpless humiliation. A waste of raging and beating waves seemed to him to have flowed between his miserable present and the simple, godly household of his childhood, the memory

memory of which had inspired him with some of his sweetest songs. The one year of calm and righteous life which he had spent with his fair and newly-wedded wife stood out in his memory like an island of bliss in an ocean of bitterness; and he recurred again and again to the face of his little son, for years deserted and forgotten, and groaned in agony as he thought how that innocent life might fall and crumble like his own under a burden of sin.

For the rest, it seemed a hideous dream, a very orgy of weakness, folly, and wickedness. At Cambridge Robert Greene had ruffled it with gay and roistering companions and, travelling into Italy, had justified the grave words of the Queen's old tutor, Roger Ascham, who had warned fathers: "Suffer not your sons to pass the Alps, for they shall learn nothing there but pride, blasphemy and atheism." In London after a short period of study, Greene plunged into

into excesses of life and conduct from which he revolted in his saner moments. At last he became the associate and boon companion of thieves and outcasts, and fell to depths whence self-respect could no longer recall him. In the days of Queen Elizabeth men had not yet learned to despise the devil. They believed in his actual existence, horns, hoofs and all. And although they dallied with him — as men have dallied, alas, in all ages — they were often overcome with terror, like Faustus, at their dealings with him. It is this which gives a tragic pathos to the despairing words of the dying Robert Greene, and shakes our modern skepticism into something like respect for the efficacy of a death-bed repentance.

The sins of Robert Greene lay heavy upon him even in the midst of his bad life. He tells us in his pamphlet, *The Repentance*, how he received an "inward motion in Saint

Saint Andrew's Church in the city of Norwich at a lecture or sermon preached by a godly learned man. . . . Whosoever was worst, I knew myself to be as bad as he: for being new come from Italy (where I learned all the villainies under heaven) I was drowned in pride . . . and gluttony with drunkenness was my only delight. At this sermon the terror of God's judgment did manifestly teach me that my exercises were damnable and that I should be wiped out of the book of life, if I did not speedily repent my looseness of life. . . . I began to call unto mind the danger of my soul . . . in so much as, sighing, I said in myself: 'Lord have mercy upon me, and send me grace to amend and become a new man.'" But returning to his "copesmates," they rallied him on his "solemn humor," "calling me Puritan and a Precisian, and wished that I might have a pulpit . . . that by their foolish persuasion the good and wholesome

wholesome lesson I had learned went quite out of my remembrance."

There were other thoughts in the mind of the dying man. He remembered an early ambition that had once glowed within him: to be a poet and create those forms of beauty in musical words, which rendered their makers, in the estimation of men, the peers of kings and princes. The reputation of Edmund Spenser, the great "new poet" at Court, burned with a steady, holy flame; and the splendid boast of the *Faerie Queene* was on the lips of many, who agreed that truly this beautiful poem, dedicated "to the Most High, Mightie and Magnificent Empresse, . . . Elizabeth, by the Grace of God Queene of England, France, Ireland and Virginia," was "to live with the eternity of her fame." And what of the work of Robert Greene? His heart fell within him as he contrasted this priceless achievement with his sweet, twittering lyrics and the

the scores of trifling pamphlets scribbled for bread, some of them wrung from his very heart-strings. He thought of the rewriting, patching, and making of plays for the fickle London play-goers, and his half-success, half-failure on the stage. Greene, like most of the earlier dramatists, was probably an actor as well as a playwright, and in the moments when his finer nature reasserted itself, may have felt, like his great and successful rival, Shakespeare, the degradation of an art the practitioners of which were coupled on the statute books with "rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars." It was but a broken career at best, and the mind of the dying player reverted to the day on which he had taken up this ignoble profession. He was sitting beside a country hedge-row penniless and disowned, and crying out upon the untowardness of his fate, when he was accosted by a stranger from the other side of the hedge. When the

the stranger approached "he saluted Robert in this sort:

"'Gentleman,' quoth he, '— for you so seem — I have by chance heard you discourse some part of your grief, which appeareth to be more than you will discover, or I can conceit. But if you vouchsafe such simple comfort as my ability will yield, assure yourself that I will endeavor to do the best that either may procure your profit or bring you pleasure: the rather, for that I suppose you are a scholar, and pity it is that men of learning should live in lack.'

"Roberto, wondering to hear such good words, for that this iron age affords few that esteem of virtue, returned him thankful gratulations, and — urged by necessity — uttered his present grief, beseeching his advice how he might be employed.

"'Why easily,' quoth he, 'and greatly to your benefit; for men of my profession get by scholars their whole living.'

"'What

"'What is your profession?' said Roberto.

"'Truly, sir,' said he, 'I am a player.'

"'A player!' quoth Roberto, 'I took you rather for a gentleman of great living; for if by outward habit men should be censured, I can tell you, you would be taken for a substantial man.'

"'So am I where I dwell,' quoth the player, 'reputed able at my proper cost to build a Windmill. What though the world once went hard with me, when I was fain to carry my playing fardle a foot-back. *Tempora mutantur*. I know you know the meaning of it better than I, but I thus conster it: it is otherwise now; for my very share in playing apparel will not be sold for two hundred pounds.'

"'Truly,' said Roberto, 'it is strange that you should so prosper in that vain practice, for that it seems to me your voice is nothing gracious.'

"'Nay then,' said the player, 'I mislike your

your judgment. Why, I am as famous for Delphrigus, the king of the fairies, as ever was any of my time. The twelve labors of Hercules have I terribly thundered on the stage, and placed three scenes of the devil on the highway to heaven.'

"'Have you so?' said Roberto, 'then I pray you pardon me.'

"'Nay more,' quoth the player, 'I can serve to make a pretty speech, for I was a country author, passing at a moral; for it was I that penned the moral of *Man's Wit*, the *Dialogue of Dives*, and for seven years' space was absolute interpreter of the puppets. But now my almanac is out of date:

The people make no estimation,
Of morals teaching education.

Was not this pretty for a plain rime extempore? If ye will ye shall have more.'

"'Nay, it is enough,' said Roberto, 'but how mean you to use me?'

"'Why, sir, in making plays,' said the other,

other, 'for which you shall be well paid, if you will take the pains.'

"Roberto, perceiving no remedy, thought best to respect his present necessity, to try his wit, and went with him willingly; who lodged him at the town's end in a house of retail, where what happened our poet, you shall hereafter hear."

From this the dying man's mind wandered on to his dramatic career; to his journey in Denmark and Saxony, with the Earl of Leicester's players, the first company of English actors to go abroad, and his sobriquet amongst them of "Robert the Parson." There, too, was his failure to catch, in his big, mouthing, bombastic *Alphonsus*, the secret of the "mighty line" and passion of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, with the praises of which the town was ringing; and there was his jealousy and the innuendoes of his pamphlets against another rival that surpassed him, Thomas Kyd, who wrote

wrote the original *Hamlet*. Success? Yes, there were successes too; for the groundlings had approved the "moral," *A Looking Glasse for London*, which, in one of his repentant moods, he had written with the Lord Mayor's young son, Thomas Lodge, and the life and spirit of his vivacious unaided plays, *Friar Bacon* and *George a Greene*, had maintained them in a genuine contemporary popularity. As to his pamphlets, everybody read them, "and glad was that printer," said Thomas Nashe, "that might be so blest to pay him deare for the very dregs of his wit."

And now he dwelt in memory upon his fellows of the stage, their bickerings and jealousies, their talents and their waste of them. Above all towered the threatening image of a great and potent spirit that was coming to shape order out of this chaos of the Elizabethan dramatic world, to wrest fortune, position, and esteem from a profession

sion that had cost the lives — and perchance the souls — of some of its followers, and to leave behind him a monument of literary glory unsurpassed in any age. Greene could not have foreknown all this, nor have felt the coming greatness of Shakespeare, save as a kind of portent betokening he knew not what. But he did know that a rival had arisen to snatch the public favor from Kyd, Marlowe, and himself; and it embittered his last hours to think that this man, who was neither a scholar nor born to even such gentry as he himself might boast, should march on to triumphant success where he had so signally failed. In mingled envy, bitterness, repentance, and despair was then penned that notorious passage which contains the first printed allusion to Shakespeare, a passage which must speak here once more for itself.

"To those gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays,

plays, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent his extremities.

"If woful experience may move you, gentlemen, to beware, or unheard of wretchedness entreat you to take heed, I doubt not but you will look back with sorrow on your time past and endeavor with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not — for with thee will I first begin — thou famous gracer of tragedians [Marlowe], that Greene, who hath said with thee like the fool in his heart, 'There is no God,' should now give glory unto his greatness. For penetrating is his power; his hand lies heavy upon me, he hath spoken with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machiavelian policy that thou hast studied? O punish folly! What are his rules but mere confused

fused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind? . . . And wilt thou, my friend, be his disciple? Look unto me, by him persuaded to that liberty, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage. I know the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilful striving against known truth exceedeth all the terrors of my soul. Defer not, with me, till this last point of extremity, for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

"With thee I join young Juvenal, that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy. [Lodge, not Nashe, for the *Looking Glasse for London* is a comedy, despite heretical opinion, and a satire; and it was written by Greene and Lodge.] Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised and get not many enemies by bitter words. Inveigh against vain men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well. Thou hast

hast a liberty to reprove all and none more. For one being spoken to, all are offended; none being blamed, no man is injured. . . .

"And thou [George Peele], no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in none inferior, driven, as myself, to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee; and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet Saint George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a stay.

" Base-minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave, those puppets, I mean [the actors], that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors.

" Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding; is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall — were ye in that case that I am now — be both at once of them forsaken? Yes

Yes trust them not; for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers that, with his 'tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide,' supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only Shakescene in a country. O, that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses, and let those apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse. Yet whilst you may, seek you better masters, for it is pity men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude grooms."

According to tradition Robert Greene died the next day, after penning these pathetic lines to the wife he had so cruelly wronged:

"Sweet

"Sweet Wife:

As ever there was any good will or friendship between thee and me, see this bearer, my host, satisfied of his debt: I owe him ten pound, and but for him I had perished in the streets. Forget and forgive my wrongs done unto thee, and Almighty God have mercy on my soul. Farewell till we meet in heaven, for on earth thou shalt never see me more.

This 2 of September

1592

Written by thy dying husband

Robert Greene."

VII

PLAYS IN THE MAKING

VII

Plays in the Making

It would be difficult to find two careers more completely in contrast than those of Shakespeare and Thomas Dekker. Beginning with almost equal disadvantages as to education and place in the world, the greater poet rose, as we all know, to repute in "the quality which he professed," to esteem amongst his fellows, to great contemporary fame as a poet (be it ever remembered), and to a handsome competence earned by his address and industry as an actor, a manager, and a playwright. On the other hand amongst the many stories of sorrow, want, and privation that belong to English

English men of letters, Dekker's is almost the saddest of all. The little we know of his life presents a weary succession of borrowings, imprisonments for debt, and prayers for relief in a wilderness of incessant toil. The writing of new plays, alone or with coadjutors at least as needy as himself, the revamping of old plays, the trimming of masques for Court, the additions of prologues, epilogues, or comic scenes, the penning of innumerable pamphlets — the incipient journalism of the day — on subjects realistic, satirical, moral, and even religious; these were the tasks of an agile and inventive brain, hack-driven and goaded to unceasing effort through a period of thirty-five years to procure the bare necessities of life. In all this writing there is much that might well be blotted out, not in scorn but with tears of compassion. Yet if we turn to Dekker's life, there remains on it no breath of aspersion, and that in an age in which

which a Marlowe died a death almost too disgraceful to relate, in which even the august form of Shakespeare casts its shadow of the *Sonnets* into the impenetrable obscurity of which it is perhaps better not too curiously to peer. Dekker's outlook on life was sweetened with that charity which comes to a good man with the chastening of adversity; his humor and his poetry welled spontaneous from a heart which no sorrow could make old nor privation wither. It is inexpressibly touching to hear such a man singing:

> Virtue's branches wither, Virtue pines,
> O pity, pity and alack the time;
> Vice doth flourish, Vice in glory shines,
> Her gilded boughs above the cedar climb;

apostrophizing "sweet content," and taking for his motto:

> Work apace, apace, apace, apace;
> Honest labor bears a lovely face;
> Then hey nonny nonny, hey nonny nonny!

There

There is more of the sigh than of song in this little meaningless refrain; the sigh of a heart in troubled equilibrium between the impelling force which urges liberty and the inexorable restraint of duty. The song is the song of a prisoned bird.

The extraordinary diversity of the careers of Shakespeare and Dekker is not explainable wholly by dissimilarity in their personal characters. It is dependent as well upon the conjunction of circumstances that made Shakespeare the most popular dramatist of the most successful theatrical company of the time and that threw Dekker, on the other hand, into the employ of Henslowe and into what became the slavery of a lifetime. Philip Henslowe was one of those shrewd, hard men of common stock and coarse fibre who seem predestined to acquire riches. His illiteracy is almost beyond belief, when we consider his years of association with the stage; but his

his astuteness and ability to drive a hard bargain were held in doubt by no one who had ever had dealings with him. Henslowe was engaged in various trading enterprises before he hit upon theatrical management, and was variously a dealer in wood, a dyer, the owner of a starch factory, a purchaser and seller of real estate, an inn or lodging-house keeper, and a pawnbroker. He is described as unscrupulously hard to his tenants, though apparently careful at all times to keep well within the bounds of the law. He thrived in his ventures and, emulous of respectability, figured as a vestryman and churchwarden of St. Saviour's, Southwark. Between the years 1584 and 1616, the year of his death, Henslowe was interested in some five or six theatres, of which the Rose, the Swan, the Fortune, and the playhouse at Newington Butts were the chief. In his management of these houses he must have been greatly assisted by the famous actor,

actor, Edward Alleyn, who had married his step-daughter and entered into a kind of partnership with him. But Henslowe had an ambition even above playhouses. After much bargaining and negotiation he contrived to obtain, soon after the accession of James, "the mastership of the royal game of bears, bulls, and mastiff dogs," thus becoming an officer of the crown. This office he retained till his death, and he transmitted it to Alleyn.

Most of our information about Henslowe and his traffic with the stage has come down to us in a manuscript commonly called *Henslowe's Diary*. It is really not a diary at all, but a species of account-book, containing memoranda of matters of interest to Henslowe in his conduct of the management of his several theatres. Neither the name of Shakespeare nor that of Beaumont nor of Fletcher, occurs in it. But it contains the names of nearly every other dramatist

Edward Alleyn

dramatist of importance during the heyday of the Elizabethan age and many of their autographs. The volume is a large folio, vellum covered, and soiled and grimy with use. It is mostly in the illiterate handwriting of Henslowe himself, although entries by other scribes, clerks, and parties to agreements and receipts therein noted are of frequent occurrence. Not only is the manuscript badly written and execrably spelled, but the entries are much confused through the evident desire of its owner to utilize every blank page. The book descended to Alleyn by will, who in turn left it to the College of God's Gift, which he had charitably founded with his own and Henslowe's money, where it still remains at Dulwich. *Henslowe's Diary* has long been known to scholars and antiquaries, and has unfortunately suffered from this acquaintance, having lost some of its leaves by tearing and some of its autographs by excision, besides

besides showing, what is worse, the interpolations of the forger.

As owner and manager of so many theatres, Henslowe was concerned with the procuring of suitable plays, their revision and adaptation for given performances, with the purchase of materials for his playhouses and the making of contracts for the building of them, with properties, costumes, and the staging of plays, and with payments to actors and "sharers," as the partners in the theatrical companies were called. All of these matters are abundantly illustrated in the *Diary*, together with others kindred but not so obvious. From being a mere manager, Henslowe came insensibly to be a sort of middle-man between the company and the playwrights, and banker or money-lender for those in his employ, standing towards them at times in the relation of a patron. Thus we find him advancing money "to harey chettell to paye his charges

charges in the marshallsey" and "to discharge Mr. Dicker [Dekker] out of the counter [the prison for debtors] in powltrey." In like straits, Field writes to him: "Father Hinchlow, I am unluckily taken on an execution of 30l. I can be discharged for xxl. xl I have from a friend: if now, in my extremity, you will venture xl more for my liberty, I will never share penny till you have it again, and make any satisfaction, by writing or otherwise, that you can devise." Henslowe's method of binding needy playwrights to his service was as simple as it was effective. On the submission and acceptance of a plan for a play an advance of money was easily obtained, a written memorandum of which was made and signed by the playwright. Further advances of money were dependent upon the precise performance of the playwright's part of the contract; but all advances were so contrived as to leave the playwright

playwright always in Henslowe's debt and the obligation between the parties was never entirely cancelled. Many a piteous appeal for money is preserved among the Alleyn papers at Dulwich, by which the inner workings of this Elizabethan sweating system for the manufacture of plays is disclosed. "Sir, if you do not like this play when it is read," writes the obscure dramatist, Robert Daborne, "you shall have the other, which shall be finished with all expedition; for, before God, this is a good one, and will give you content: howsoever you shall never lose a farthing by me, wherefor I pray you misdoubt me not; . . . and, I pray you, send me ten shillings." Again: "Sir, your man was with me, who found me writing the last scene, which I had thought to have brought you to-night, but it will be late ere I can do it; and being Saturday night, my occasion urges me to request you spare me ten shillings more." And

And lastly in great urgency: "Mr. Hinchlow, of all friendship let me be beholding to you for one twenty shillings, which shall be the last I will request till the play be fully by us ended."

In the consideration of plots for new plays Henslowe employed the expert advice of Alleyn. Thus Daborne writes Henslowe that a promised play "shall come upon the neck of this new play they are now studying; if you please to appoint any hour to read to Mr. Alleyn, I will not fail, nor after this day lose any time til it be concluded." The bids of rival companies are at times quoted to raise the price of plays, a device which does not seem to have proved very effective, but which resulted in an agreement by one playwright to write only for Henslowe's company. Instances are not wanting in which the subtle old manager appears to have been taken in by writers who would not hesitate, could it be safely done,

done, to palm off old productions for new and thus perhaps quit old scores.

From these battered pages we obtain thus a momentary picture of a busy public mart for the buying and selling of plays; a glimpse of the wires that moved the puppets of the time: puppets that played their parts in emulation of the puppets of Shakespeare, that strained to rival him in his might, nay held their own in the judgment of the contemporary play-goer to the enrichment of Henslowe. Henslowe's patrons seem to have demanded a new play about once a fortnight, contenting themselves meanwhile with plays which had already received their suffrage. It was not customary to repeat a play on successive days. Popular plays were repeated, however, at not infrequent intervals; thus Marlowe's *Faustus* was performed fifteen times within a twelvemonth, his *Jew of Malta* and *Tamburlaine* nearly as often, both parts of

of the last play being given on two occasions on successive days. Besides these plays of Marlowe, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and a play which Henslowe calls "hary vj" enjoyed the greatest popularity among the plays still extant and enumerated by Henslowe. It was of scenes in this play that Thomas Nashe wrote, in a pamphlet contemporary with these entries of Henslowe: "Nay what if I prove plays to be no extreme, but a rare exercise of virtue? First, for the subject of them, for the most part it is borrowed out of our English chroniclers, wherein our forefathers' valiant acts (that have lain long buried in rusty brass and worm-eaten books) are revived, and they themselves raised from the grave of oblivion and brought to plead their aged honors in open presence; than which what can be a sharper reproof of these degenerate effeminate days of ours? How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French,

French, to think that after he had lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding." The most captious critics grant to Shakespeare these scenes of an old play refashioned by his hand and raised to an immediate and overwhelming popularity. The Elizabethan play-goer with unerring instinct singled out for his signal approval the great dramas of Kyd and Marlowe and the unsurpassable work of the master playwright.

The lists of Henslowe exhibit many titles similar to those borne by plays of Shakespeare. We meet with an *Adronicus*, a "*Venesyons* [*Venice's*] *comodey*," a "*Seser and Pompey*," and a "*Harry the V.*" Neither identity of title nor sameness of plot need mislead

mislead the reader of Elizabethan literature, who soon learns that there are some half dozen plays, Latin and English, on Julius Cæsar and on Richard the Third, three Romeos and Antonies, and at least two Hamlets, Timons, and Lears. When a character caught the public fancy, his story was followed up in a second play, at times even in a third. It is thus that the career of the ideal Englishman of action, King Henry the Fifth, is carried out in the trilogy of the two parts of *Henry the Fourth* and *Henry the Fifth*. Falstaff, a great popular favorite, runs through the same three dramas to appear once more in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, according to a pleasing tradition upon the express wish of the Queen to behold the fat knight in love. But not only was a success of this kind followed up by those who had wrought it, it was emulated by humbler rivals in the imitation of the subjects, personages, and situations of the

the successful drama. The character of Falstaff was originally represented under the name of Sir John Oldcastle, a dissolute companion (not otherwise distinguished) of the wild young prince in an old play on the *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. Shakespeare at first retained the name Oldcastle, as appears from certain traces in the quarto edition of *Henry the Fourth* and from the prince's punning reply to Falstaff's question: "Is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench? — As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle." Shakespeare afterwards substituted the name Falstaff, as better fitted to "the gross knight" than that of Oldcastle, the illustrious Lollard of history. On the basis of these circumstances and the great popularity of *Henry the Fourth*, Henslowe procured the writing by several of his poets of a play called the *First Part of Sir John Oldcastle*, in which ostentatious justice is done to the memory of

of the famous old Lollard, and we are informed in the prologue:

> It is no pamper'd glutton we present,
> Nor aged counsellor to youthful sin,
> But one whose virtues shone above the rest,
> A valiant martyr and a virtuous peer.

In this play King Henry may be seen once more in contact *incognito* with the low life of London, robbed of his purse and winning back his loss from the thief with dice on a drum-head. And here, too, a direct bid is made to rival the popularity of Falstaff in the person of a witty, knavish priest, Sir John, the Parson of Wrotham. *Sir John Oldcastle* is a readable play yet, and shows what four clever men — among them no less a person than Michael Drayton, the author of the *Polyolbion* — could do to stem for the moment the overwhelming current of Shakespeare's popularity.

What Shakespeare received in money for a single play we have no means of learning; we

we know that he came to London a poor lad and retired with a handsome competence some twenty years later, realizing the greatest fortune which had been made out of literature directly or indirectly until we come to the golden days of Scott and his *Waverley Novels*. As to Shakespeare's rivals in the thraldom of Henslowe, it appears that a play might be purchased of Chettle or Heywood for as small a sum as four or six pounds, while Chapman, Dekker, or Jonson might demand as much as ten or eleven pounds and get it. The disparity between the price of a play and the cost of staging it has often been dilated upon. For while properties and scenes in the modern acceptation of that term were few and simple, the costumes of the actors were often of great richness and costliness. It has been related that Heywood received less for his wholly admirable *A Woman Killed with Kindness* than the company laid out for the gown

gown of the heroine, and that the costumes and caparisons of a play called *Cardinal Wolsey* must have reached a total of more than two hundred pounds. When a play was very successful, as was *Oldcastle*, mentioned above, Henslowe occasionally opened his heart and presented the authors with a gratuity. Ten shillings was thus distributed among the four authors of that play, and this ridiculous sum may be regarded as the height of Henslowe's bounty on these occasions. Even such matters are duly charged to the company by their thrifty manager, as appears from such an entry as this: "Layd owt for the company, at the mermayd, when we weare at owre agrement, the 21 of aguste 1602, toward our super, the sum of ix^{s}."

In this mart of Henslowe's some of the greatest dramatists served their apprenticeship to the trade. The old manager was a notable respecter of persons where fortune or

or success was concerned. Chapman, who was born a gentleman, is generally referred to in the *Diary* as "Mr. Chapman," as is "Mr. Maxton [Marston] the newe poete;" but "Harey Chettell," "Samwell Rowley," and "Thomas Dickers" were not usually treated with such a show of respect. The greater men came out of this thraldom, Jonson to the post of laureate and entertainer of the Court, Chapman to fame as the great translator of Homer. It is not to be wondered that Drayton, when the patronage of "great ones" and his talents as a poet had raised him to repute, tried to cover up the disgraceful time of his bondage to Henslowe and refrained from avowing the authorship of any work written under such blighting conditions. As to the lesser men, many of them died, as they had lived, with the clutch of Henslowe and poverty at their throats.

VIII

WHEN MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY AGREE

VIII

When Music and Sweet Poetry agree

If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the Sister and the Brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the Lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such,
As passing all conceit, needs no defence.
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound,
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned,
Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

It was thus that one of the most tuneful of Elizabethan lyrists, Richard Barnfield, addressed a bosom friend. Nor can we wonder, considering Shakespeare's love of the sister art of music and the excellence of this sonnet, that it has passed current, until lately, as the work of the master dramatist himself. Shakespeare's age was nothing if not musical. No gentleman's or lady's education was complete without a knowledge of plain-song and a competent skill on cittern or lute, on the recorder or the "viol de gamboys," all of them popular musical instruments of the day. To be unable to bear a part in singing at sight or to "descant," as it was called, on a simple melody, was to imperil the genuineness of a man's gentility; and not to know Byrd, Morley, or Campion, the composers, and Dowland, the famous lutenist, was to betray oneself uncultured indeed. Even among the middle and lower classes, the carter had his

his catches, the tinker his rounds; the very beggars sang ballads in the streets and so proverbially expert were the weavers in sweet singing that "to draw a soul out of a weaver" was to sing beyond criticism and comparison. There was music at the theatres, at Court, and at home; music out-doors and in church. The dawn was ushered in with "hunts-ups" and "aubades," and the night rendered melodious with "seras" and serenades. There were ballads for daily singing, carols for Christmas, "dumps" for despondency, and merry burdens for May-day. Foundlings were trained in the art of song that from their musical abilities they might the more readily procure places as servants. A fool with "a good breast," as a fine voice was then called, might demand a noble for his patron. Royalty set this musical example. Aside from the singing children of her chapel and the occasional musicians that figured at court entertainments

ments and plays, "Elizabeth was accustomed," we are told, "to be regaled during dinner with twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums; which together with fifes, cornets and side drums, made the hall ring for half an hour together." Nor was "the Queenes noise," as the quaint phrase went, always equally robust. Elizabeth loved song and was herself "well seene" in the virginals, an instrument, through spinet and harpsichord, to develop into the modern pianoforte. The Queen's father before her had written songs and sung in his own glees.

Modern musicians sometimes set beautiful lyrics to music; but for the most part we esteem any stuff good enough to sing. Such was not the Elizabethan feeling; and it was conceived not only that a poem might be clothed in a fitting or unfitting raiment of song, but that a lovely air deserved to carry fair freight on its clear and liquid stream;

stream; for, to vary the figure, it was a conviction that out of the wedded arts a completer beauty might arise. The lyric, when all has been said, is cousin-german to vocal song, and many an Elizabethan lyrist thought doubtless as he wrote that his poetry would be sung as well as read.

"These poems," prints old Gascoigne in a marginal note to his *Posies*, "have verie sweete notes adapted unto them, the which I would you should also enjoy as well as myself." But the Elizabethan stopped not at lyrics, but set other forms of poetry to music. Thus Robert Southwell, the Jesuit father, proposed that his fervid, if ingeniously "conceited," poetry should be sung; and so late as 1622 John Hanay, a very small and obscure poetling, furnished music for the first stanza of his poem *Philomela*, with the evident and unabashed intent that the remaining ninety and nine stanzas be sung, all to the same tune. Nor was this so very

very eccentric; narrative poems of considerable length must have been popularly sung far into literary times. Sir Philip Sidney writes in his *Defence of Poesie:* "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas [*Chevy Chase*], that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style." And the rhetorical courtier, Puttenham, declares: "The over busy and too speedy return of one manner of tune doth too much annoy and, as it were, glut the ear, unless it be small and popular musics sung by those *Cantabanqui* upon benches and barrel heads, where they have none other audience than boys and country fellows that pass by them in the street; or else by blind harpers, or such like tavern minstrels that give a fit of mirth for a groat; and their matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the *Tale of Sir Thopas*,

Thopas, *Bevis of Southampton*, *Guy of Warwick*, *Adam Bell*, and *Clym of the Clough*, and such other old romances or historical rimes, made purposely for the amusement of the common people at Christmas dinners, and bride-ales, and in taverns and alehouses, and such other places of base resort."

The modern practitioner in music who makes his living by the practical teaching of his art and professes — perhaps knows — nothing of the science of counterpoint, must have been entirely unknown to the age of Elizabeth. Or, if known, he was probably regarded in the category with fencing and dancing masters. Indeed the piper, fiddler, or other common musician was held in great contempt. Mercutio meets Tybalt's taunt, "Thou consort'st with Romeo," with the rejoinder: "Consort! What, dost thou make us minstrels? And thou make minstrels of us, look for nothing

nothing but discords: here's my fiddle-stick; here's that shall make you dance. Zounds, consort!" And Prince Hal is related to have once broken Falstaff's head for likening his father, the King, to "a singing-man of Windsor." On the other hand famous performers on the lute and other instruments there were, and some of these were held in high repute. Some of them even travelled abroad to foreign courts to exhibit their English skill. Apart from mere "*cantabanqui*" and minstrels, the Elizabethan musician was a man of refinement and learning, versed in ancient lore as well as modern art, and claiming, like the Elizabethan poet, the University as his nesting-place.

The popularity of song-books in this era was extraordinary and unexampled, extending, should a list be made, to some seventy titles between the date of the Armada and that of the death of Shakespeare. There

There were fashions in poetry as well as in the costume of the time, and both were quick to rise and quick to fall. In the eighties poetry was "all for pastorals," and "that smooth song, 'Come live with me and be my love,' which was made by Kit Marlowe," is the measure at once of a quaint taste and a perfect achievement in its dainty kind. In the nineties came the sonneteers with their sugared similitudes, a cult of Petrarch, beauty and "conceit;" artificial and repetitious for the most part, yet reaching real passion in Sidney, supreme beauty in Spenser, and sounding depths beyond mere passing fashion, if not beyond all other lyrical poetry, in the superlative sonnets of Shakespeare. With the waning of the popularity of the sonnet, the writing of words intended to be set to music succeeded as the lyrical vogue in England, and was long to continue so.

"I endeavored to get into my hands all such

such English songs as were praiseworthy, and amongst others I had the happiness to find in the hands of some of my friends certain Italian madrigals translated most of them five year ago by a gentleman for his private delight." Thus writes Nicholas Yong, a London merchant in 1588, an enthusiastic collector of "songs in part," whose house was musical with their frequent performance, and who employed his correspondents in Italy to seek out and send him the compositions of Marenzio, Converso, and other Italian writers of vocal music.

The Elizabethan song-book supplied both music and words, and was often so printed that three or four singers might sit on opposite sides of a small table, placing the book open before them, and sing each from his own part, all printed on the same page. The secular song-book was made up usually of madrigals or of "ayres." An ayre was

was a simple musical composition for one voice or more accompanied by instruments; a madrigal was a far more complicated affair. Not only was the madrigal written for voices alone, but it was contrapuntal, that is, based on an elaborate system of themes and counter-themes interwoven and entwined, of which the *suites* of Scarlotti and Palestrina and the fugues of John Sebastian Bach are later examples. It was thus that Thomas Morley commented on the structure of the madrigal: "As for the music, it is, next unto the motet, the most artificial and to men of understanding the most delightful. If therefore you will compose in this kind you must possess yourself with an amorous humor, (for in no composition shall you prove admirable except you put on and possess yourself wholly with that vein wherein you compose) so that you must in your music be wavering like the wind, sometimes wanton, sometimes

sometimes drooping, sometime grave and staid, otherwhile effeminate; you may retain points and revert them, use tri-plays and show the uttermost of your variety, and the more variety you show the better shall you please."

But if the music of the madrigal was elaborate, the words were simplicity itself. A tiny gem of verse is the madrigal, conveying one thought directly and daintily expressed in a succession of equal sentences. Its very words are in the nature of song.

Faustina hath the fairer face,
And Phyllida the feater grace;
Both have mine eye enrichèd:
This sings full sweetly with her voice;
Her fingers make as sweet a noise:
Both have mine ear bewitchèd.
Ah me! sith Fates have so provided,
My heart, alas, must be divided.

At times the madrigal contains much of the essence of the epigram, as in Michael Drayton's

Drayton's lines addressed to Morley, the celebrated composer mentioned above:

Such was old Orpheus' cunning,
That senseless things drew near him,
And herds of beasts to hear him.
The stock, the stone, the ox, the ass, came running.
Morley, but this enchanting
To thee, to be the music god, is wanting;
And yet thou needst not fear him;
Draw thou the shepherds still, and bonny lasses,
And envy him not stocks, stones, oxen, asses.

But it is not to be supposed that the free Elizabethan Muse was long to be confined in such gossamer trammels as these. Sidney had already written the lines, "My true love hath my heart," so charming in their simplicity, and in Shakespeare's "Take, O take, those lips away," and "Full fathom five my father lies," we have more exquisite words for the madrigal (albeit freer in form) than all the Italian poets could contrive among them.

The ayre afforded a freer and happier union

union of the arts than did the madrigal with its contrapuntal music and its brief range of words and ideas. The Elizabethan ayre set to the successive stanzas of a fine lyric must be regarded as the highest triumph of combined musical and poetic art. And lovely as the enchanting words of the best lyrics are — those in the song-books of Campion, Jones, Morley, Hume, Wilson, and many more — they were not unworthily set. Some of the music has been preserved by Chappell and others. It seems to us quaint and old-fashioned, for music changes more rapidly than poetry, and is more conventional in its temporary modes and passing mannerisms. And yet there is often a pleasing cadence about these old tunes, which, taken all in all, do not seem more old-fashioned than the ruffs, the farthingales, and the falling bands which characterized the costumes of our English forefathers.

These old musicians must have been an interesting class, with their University breeding, their practice of the learned and intricate counterpoint of the day, and their foreign and courtly associations. William Byrd, the Queen's instructor on the virginals, held for some years a monopoly of the music published, out of which he seems to have made less than Raleigh contrived to obtain out of his monopoly of sweet wines. Thomas Morley of the Chapel Royal, a prolific writer of secular music, as seven or eight books of his attest, is ever memorable as one of the earliest composers of music to Shakespeare's perfect songs. It was Morley, we are told, who set "It was a lover and his lass" to a tune which has a lilt and a freshness which time has been little able to impair. A third musician of great repute in his day as a lutenist was John Dowland, immortalized in the sonnet, "In praise of Music and sweet Poetry," already

already quoted above. There may be seen the estimation in which music was held in the comparison of Dowland's repute to that of Spenser in poetry. Dowland was one of those that carried the fame of English musicians to the continent. He was lutenist at various times to the Landgrave of Hesse, to the King of Denmark, and to other noble and royal patrons. It is interesting to find the Landgrave addressing Dowland in terms of respectful consideration, denoting a recognition of that equality with princes which the mastery of a fine art can at times confer. Dowland appears to have been a victim of what we now call "the artistic temperament," through which he became an object of deep sympathy and concern to himself and a sore trial, doubtless, to all his friends.

A difference of opinion has arisen as to whether the composers of madrigals and ayres were usually the authors of the words of

of their songs or not. Mr. Bullen, a pioneer in the recognition and collection of the lyrics of Elizabeth's age, is of opinion that "the composers are responsible only for the music." Whereas Mr. Davey, the author of an excellent history of music, says: "It appears to me that as a rule the tunes and the poetry were simultaneously conceived. I ground this belief on the detailed parallelism in the metre of the successive stanzas in the ayres through which the same music affects them all." There seems something in this; although another argument might be found in the uniformity of the poetical style which often accompanies the musical works of the same composer. In the works of the greatest man of this class, Thomas Campion, we are certain that the two arts were fittingly and indissolubly wedded. As to the lesser lights, it matters very little, though I should like to be sure that Robert Jones and Captain

tain Tobias Hume are the delightful poets which the words to the songs in their books would indicate if they wrote them. Mr. Bullen has picked out the following perfect stanza to form the text for one of his volumes of lyrics:

> O Love! they wrong thee much
> That say thy sweet is bitter,
> When thy rich fruit is such
> As nothing can be sweeter.
> Fair house of joy and bliss,
> Where truest pleasure is,
> I do adore thee:
> I know thee what thou art,
> I serve thee with my heart
> And fall before thee.

Alas that a man who could write like this should remain forever a flitted shade and mere *simulacrum* of departed glory. Could Captain Tobias Hume have wielded his sword as his pen he could scarcely have left the world a more consummate swordsman. Quite as perfect for the music of their

their words are such lines as these, half whimsical, half daintily serious:

> How many new years have grown old
> Since first thy servant old was new!
> How many long hours have I told
> Since first my love was vowed to you!
> And yet, alas! she doth not know
> Whether her servant love or no.

This stanza is from one of the songs of Robert Jones's *Garden of Delight*, a book now hopelessly lost. Doubtless many a jewel choice as this, with much that was weightier if less precious, has fallen a prey to "envious and calumniating Time."

When all has been said, we find in Thomas Campion the most notable example of the poet-musician. As to him, at least, there can be no doubt, for he writes concerning his own song-books: "Some words are in these books which have been clothed in music by others, and I am content they then served their turn: yet give me leave to make

make use of mine own." In a similar address prefixed to his *Third Book of Ayres*, he adds: "In these English ayres I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together, which will be much for him to do that hath not power over both." A member of Gray's Inn in his youth, a distinguished practitioner of the sister art of medicine in his maturer years, Campion was esteemed for his Latin poetry and for his English music; for his critical theories wherein he sought to turn English poetry back into the well-worn channels of the classics; and for the admirable practice with which he confuted these theories in his beautiful English lyrical verse. Campion was a very accomplished man and held an honored place among contemporary musicians alike for his compositions and for his excellent treatise on counterpoint. Although a conservative as to prosody, Campion was remarkably liberal as to music and wrote ayres

ayres in preference to madrigals of set purpose. He says: "What epigrams are in poetry, the same are ayres in music; then in their chief perfection when they are short and well seasoned. But to cloy a sweet song with a long preludium is to corrupt the nature of it."

The poetry of Campion is saturated with Catullus and it shares in the Roman poet's sweetness, sensuousness, and mellifluous flow of musical words. Campion is not wholly a poet of love, although he lavishes on Venus's altars his richest and loveliest fruits. There is a purity and simple childlike fervor, a genuine singing quality and happy mastery of phrase in the more serious of his songs that raise Campion measurably above the chorus of amourists and dainty gilded sonneteers who rise and fall in a singing swarm among the sallows of the Elizabethan garden of Love.

But this pure and natural union of lyrical

ical poetry and song was not the only unity of the arts attempted in this ingenious time. True the opera was as yet *in embryo* in far-away Italy, the home of beauty and of many perversions thereof. Florentine Peri and Caccini, seeking quixotically to resurrect and rejuvenate the dead Muse of Greek tragedy, had invented modern opera, "the anarchy of the arts" as Schlegel was later to call it. Campion might have known the authors of *Dafne* and *Euridice*, both of which were presented in Florence before Elizabeth had ceased to reign. Whether the English composer knew *le nuove musiche*, may be questioned, although his attitude of preference for the ayre over the older scientific music was precisely that of the early Italian writers of opera. The English masque, too, attempted this union of arts, and keeping sound ever subservient to the sense of sight, with dancing, artistic grouping and costuming, combined the

the earthly Muse of comedy with the spiritual Muse of song. When Jonson wrote a masque for Court he called in the aid of Inigo Jones, the royal architect, who devised the scenes, decorations, and costumes and, with the practical assistance of "the King's master carpenter," contrived the mechanical devices for change and effect. For the music, Jonson resorted to "his excellent friend, Alphonso Ferrabosco," the English-born son of a celebrated Italian composer of Henry the Eighth's Court of the same name, whose works, whether in song or instrumental, were of equal repute in his day.

The music of the masque was of great variety, now descriptive with pipe and tabor or drum and trumpet; now arranged in "consorts," as the harmony of instruments of one kind was called; now "broken," as the mingling of various instruments or instruments with voices was described. It would be difficult to conceive of a man better

better fitted than Campion, by nature and by study, for the devising of such minglings of the arts. Characteristically, as a musician, Campion begins the description of his *Masque at the Marriage of the Lord Hayes* with an account of the music. The great hall, wherein the masque was presented, he tells us, " received this division and order. The upper part, where the cloth and chair of state were placed, had scaffolds and seats on either side continued to the screen ; right before it was a partition for the dancing-place ; on the right hand whereof were consorted ten musicians, with bass and mean lutes, a bandora, a double sackbut, and an harpsichord, with two treble violins; on the other side somewhat nearer the screen were placed nine violins and three lutes, and to answer both the consorts (as it were in a triangle), six cornets and six chapel voices were seated almost right against them, in a place raised higher in respect of the

the piercing sound of those instruments; eighteen foot from the screen another stage was raised higher by a yard than that which was prepared for dancing. This higher stage was all enclosed with a double veil, so artificially painted, that it seemed as if dark clouds had hung before it: within that shroud was concealed a green valley, with green trees about it, and in the midst of them nine golden trees of fifteen foot high, with arms and branches very glorious to behold."

In the great variety of songs that followed, much was made of the differences in position of the various bands or consorts of musicians and in the contrasted qualities, combinations and volume of the instruments and voices; and the songs — many of them lyrics of great beauty — were variously set for solos, answering duets, and choruses, accompanied or free. Thus "four Sylvans" played on their musical instruments the first strain

strain of a song by way of prelude, "and at the repetition thereof the voices fell in with the instruments which were thus divided: a treble and a bass were placed near his Majesty, and another treble and bass near the grove, that the words of the song might first be heard of all, because the trees of gold instantly at the first sound of their voices began to move and dance according to the measure of the time which the musicians kept in singing, and the nature of the words which they delivered." Little by little the trees sank out of sight, "a matter effected," we are informed, "by an engine placed under the stage," and out of them emerged the noble dancers; for be it remembered that one of the joys of the masque consisted in the circumstance that it was not a performance wholly to be looked at, but that the noblest lords and the fairest ladies were partakers in its dazzling scenes and graceful figures, and even royalty in the

the persons of the Queen, Princes and Princesses condescended at times to bear a part. The climax of this masque Campion thus describes: "This chorus was in the manner of an echo, seconded by the cornets, then by the consort of ten, then by the consort of twelve, and by a double chorus of voices standing on either side, the one against [that is, opposite to] the other, bearing five voices apiece, and sometime every chorus was heard severally, sometime mixed, but in the end all together: which kind of harmony so distinguished by the place [that is, position], and by the several nature of instruments and changeable conveyance of the song, and performed by so many excellent masters as were actors in that music, (their number amounting to forty-two voices and instruments) could not but yield great satisfaction to the hearers."

In these days of grand opera and of musical festivals punctuated with cannon, Campion's musical

musical masque seems but a small affair. It was successful and amazingly novel for its age; and who shall say that the Elizabethan's ideal to wed music and lyrical verse, environed in scenic beauty and illustrated by the poetry of motion, differed so very widely from the Wagnerian dream wherein that lordly bridegroom, the drama of Shakespeare, was to lead to an indissoluble marriage before the altar of all the arts, his bride the heaven-born music of Beethoven?

IX

THALIA IN *OXFORD*

IX

THALIA *in* OXFORD

ENGLAND had adored mummings, pageants, and interludes for generations when Elizabeth came to her throne. There had been, time out of mind, disguisings and masquings on high days and holidays, puppets in booths at fairs, and "bride-ales" as the commoner wedding festivities were called, theatricals in barns, inn-yards, and on London streets. Before the reign was half over, if a murder was committed, it was staged for a warning. Had a continental city been besieged or a foreign political criminal fallen, all was arranged for the boards before it was stale in the memories

ories of men. But this popular side of the drama is far from all. Parallel to the great drama which the names of Marlowe and Shakespeare adorned and carried home to the hearts of common men, ran a scholar's and a courtier's drama, earlier and more august in its originals, equally tenacious of its more conservative ideals, and equally potent in its influences on contemporary times and on times to come. This scholar's and courtier's drama claimed the earliest of the great English playwrights wholly for its own; and the name which ranks next to Shakespeare's was two thirds of its making. For Lyly and Jonson were alike purveyors of amusement to nobility and royalty. And even when, under newer influences, the Court drama failed, and the succeeding masque, a union of the arts of Thalia, Euterpe, and Terpsichore, was waning in the glare of Puritanism, which unveiled, like day, the tawdry unrealities of the stage, the

the Universities cherished the old traditions and continued to perform primitive tragedies that Sackville might have disdained, and comedies the crude classicality of which would have moved the seasoned comedians of London to derisive laughter.

Not that there were not notable triumphs among the university plays both Latin and English. *Ezechias*, written in English verse in the fifties by Nicholas Udall, the author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, the first English comedy, was so "handled by King's College men" that a learned Welsh prelate declared it "worthy for a queen to behold." Nashe and Harington combined to praise the *Richardus Tertius* of Dr. Legge, who to his dramatic honors added the distinction of being twice chosen Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge. Oxford *Bellum Grammaticale* and Cambridge *Pedantius* remained for years approved and praised as models of university comedy, and shared with *Ignoramus*

ramus (which was even translated into English that the vulgar might share in its choice university wit) a popularity which lasted through a couple of generations. The drama had been a passion with the Humanists, who flourished throughout the Europe of Charles the Fifth and the Borgias. Ralph Radcliffe, a schoolmaster of Hertfordshire, transformed the refectory of the old monastery in which he held his school into a veritable theatre, wherein his students acted plays of his composing for the strengthening of their memories and the betterment of their Latinity. George Buchanan, grave historian and tutor to Mary Queen of Scots and her son, King James, wrote Latin plays for his students when a teacher in the new college at Boulogne, and the young Montaigne is related to have acted in them. Whilst excellent John Palsgrave (in his zeal for learning) transmuted *Acolastus*, a Latin comedy of a famous Dutch

Dutch scholar often performed by schoolboys, into a text-book from which to learn Latin, translating each scene, interpreting the characters, the style, and the metres of the author as a Latin classic, "not only," he said, "for because I esteem that little volume to be a very curious and artificial compacted nosegay, gathered out of the much excellent and odoriferous sweet-smelling garden of the most pure Latin authors, but also because the maker thereof — as far as I can learn — is yet living, whereby I would be glad to move into the hearts of your Grace's clerks some little grain of honest and virtuous envy."

In fine, it had long been the custom of the grammar schools, the colleges, and Inns of Court to invent devices, to hold revels and entertainments, to revive Roman comedies or perform original plays, and to live in an atmosphere of invention, rehearsal, and persistent theatrical activity. At times these

these attacks of dramatic craze extended through protracted periods, and play after play was performed, the whole combined by means of an elaborate connecting ceremonial. Thus in the year 1594 the students of Gray's Inn "betwixt All-Hollantide and Christmas" carried on a series of festivities before their self-elected "Prince of Purpoole" which, although "the rather to be preferred by witty inventions than by chargeable expenses," must have been as sumptuous as they were novel and elaborate. What with a "family and followers" of upwards of a hundred "nobles and attendants," each bearing his part, what with the coronation, the receptions of "homagers and tributaries," proclamations, revels, the arguments before the throne on the exercise of war or the study of philosophy, with other orations, letters "from abroad," the replies of his Majesty, the founding of royal orders of knighthood, and the performance

formance of three complete and difficult masques — some conception may be formed of the magnitude, elaborated ceremonial, and the curious particulars of the *Gesta Grayorum* as the whole function was called. The masques were by Beaumont, Chapman, and Campion, all recognized poets in their day; and in the final entertainment Queen Elizabeth herself was "Prince Purpoole's" guest.

But it is with a somewhat less known period of dramatic craze that we are now concerned; and with Oxford, not Gray's Inn. In an interesting manuscript still preserved in the Library of St. John's College, one Griffin Higgs, evidently a student who was in the midst of it all, has left us an account of a series of festivities, dramatic in kind, which starting, so far as the arrangements were concerned, early in October, 1607, were continued until Lent put a stop to the hilarity. During this period a sort

sort of theatrical contagion spread from gownsmen to the town, and from the freshmen, who had a simple farce of their own in English, to the Dons, who gravely enacted matter didactic in the learned tongue.

The whole thing began at St. John's among "the poulderings" or students of the second year, who, ascertaining that thirty years before similar festivities had been held, determined to emulate the past. First of all a Christmas Prince was chosen who issued under his royal seal, in such Latin as the combined learning of "the poulderings" could muster, solemn proclamations of various kinds, chiefly concerned with the raising of revenue. For the Prince's instalment "a schollarlike device called *Ara Fortunæ*" was given. The interlocutors were Princeps, Philosophus, Rusticus, and Stultus and the language was evidently Latin. This play was not given on

on a stage but on the tables of the refectory or dining-hall set closely together. The applause was so vociferous at one point that it brought down the canopy of Fortune; but, says Higgs, "it was cleanly supported by some of the standers by till the company was voided." The play is not given in the manuscript, "because of its length."

The next performance was "a private shewe in the manner of an interlude containing the order of Saturnalls, and shewing the first cause of Christmas candles." The characters were Hercules, Curius, and Doulus. "This shew," naïvely remarks our student informant, "was very well liked of ourselves." Two days later, it being St. John's Day, a masque with a morris dance was given in the afternoon, and in the evening a second masque entitled the *Twelve Days*, "the holy-daies speaking Latin and the working daies English." The *Tragedy of*

of Philomela was booked for December the twenty-ninth, but there was much trouble in getting it ready and when all was done, unhappily, "the Prince himselfe, who was to play Tereus, had got such an exceeding cold that it was impossible for him to speak, or speaking to be heard." "At length it was concluded that in case the Prince should not hold out, that then the author of the tragedy, who was best acquainted with it and could say most of the verses, should go forward." Fortunately the Prince's voice "held out" and the tragedy was a great success. "Itys was much wondered at for speaking Latin, because he was so little in his long coat that he was taken to be a child but of seven or eight years old."

The performance of New Year's Day was "a shew called *Times Complaint*." The piece was badly given. The Prologue forgot his lines and "Goodwife Spiggott [one of the characters] coming forth before her time, was

was most miserably at a *non plus* and made others so also, whilst herself stalked in the midst like a great Harry lyon as it pleased the audience to term it, either saying nothing at all or nothing to the purpose." The drunken man too, "who in the repetitions had much pleased and done very well, was now so ambitious of his actions that he would needes make his part much longer than it was, and stood so long upon it all that he grew tedious." "Expectation," says our young student with a sigh, "the devourer of all good endeavours, has swallowed more in the very name and title of this interlude than was either provided or intended in the whole matter. We ourselves thought not so ill of it as others, neither will future times, we hope, judge it so vile as the present did." How wise a dispensation it is that authorship and motherhood are alike blind and dote oftentimes on the least favored of their weans!

On

On counting the cost of *Time's Complaint*, our young adventurers discovered to their dismay that the exchequer of his Majesty was running low. Therefore a proclamation, egregious alike in its solemnity and its Latinity, was promulgated whereby his Majesty's liege subjects were adjured to pay the charges, and assessed in proportion to their dignities, a freshman two shillings, a pouldering, four.

On the tenth of January two private "shews" were given in the lodgings of St. John's. The first was called *Somnium Fundatoris*, and concerned matters traditionary in the history of the college; the other was a mock play entitled the *Seven Days of the Week*. Besides the Days, the "clarke of St. Gyles," a woman, and a pair of snuffers figured amongst the *dramatis personæ* or the properties, which shall we say? This play is given in the manuscript and, while but a slight piece of fooling, is far from devoid of

of wit. "Enter Sunday Night, *cum Luna et aliis pertinentiis*" reminds us of Bottom's famous scratch company where Starveling or Snug is advised to "come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn and say he comes to disfigure or to present the person of Moonshine." The *Seven Days of the Week* was written for younger boys "who could not do serious things." It went in consequence so well that it was repeated publicly by request a few days later.

Here his "Highness" was constrained to descend to asking the Dons for an extension of his rule, and they granted him seven more days. On the fifteenth of January a Latin play entitled *Philomanthes* was acted with great applause, the audience crying again and again, "*Abunde satisfactum est!*" and giving other signs of encouragement. The subsequent performances were a *Yule-tide Melody of Christmas Sports*, whatever that may have been, a *Vigilate on Candlemas Night*

Night preceded by a mock proclamation and a masque "sudden and extempore," a "shew" by the masters and officers "in mete and semely Latin phrase," a masque of *Penelope's Wooers*, and lastly, on Shrove Tuesday, on a great stage, the masque of the Prince's resignation entitled *Ira seu Tumulus Fortunæ*. "The stage," says our scribe, "was never so oppressed with company, in so much that it was verily thought that it would not be performed that night for want of room; but the audience was so favorable as to stand as close and yield as much back as was possible," and hence the masque was successfully presented.

Although the Prince had now given up his rule, the theatrical spirit was still rampant at Oxford, and as an English tragedy was almost ready, argument arose as to whether it should be acted or not. Against its presentation it was argued that Lent was approaching and enough attention had already

already been bestowed on performances which, when all had been said in their favor, were little better than toys. Moreover it was credibly reported that the intended play was written in English, "a language unfit for the University." After protracted and heated argument both objections were finally overruled, and *Periander* was given, with a very large cast, by the pick of the long-trained actors of St. John's. Profiting by their former troublesome experience, "the stage was kept void of all company." "It is almost incredible," says our enthusiastic devotee of Melpomene, "to think how well this tragedy was performed of all parties." One of the characters was called Detraction, and was placed, according to a familiar device of the contemporary stage, in the audience. He played his part so well that "he was like to have been beaten for his sauciness." Another actor, who played the part of Periander, when about

about to kill his daughter Eugenia, "did not so couch his dagger with his hand but that he pricked her through all her attire. But, as God would have it," piously adds our informant, "it was only a scratch, and so it passed." As only a small part of the Oxonians could be accommodated with standing room within the hall, several unruly spirits — rival poulderings, no doubt — raised what our friend Higgs called "a tumult, without the windows." Whereupon "the whifflers made a raid upon them with their swords and drove the crowd out of the precincts, imprisoning some until after the play was over."

Such was the violence of this attack of theatro-mania that we hear of yet other productions, by their authors and actors intended. *A Controversy of Irus* and his ragged company, *An Embassy from Lubberland*, *The Creation of the White Knights of the Order of Aristotles Well:* such were some of the projected

jected matters which the patient but wearied Dons contrived to consign to the Limbo of unfulfilled achievement. Nor were the youthful projectors without their troubles. Our friend complains that in the repetitions as in the performances "some there were that stood by and gave aim, willing to see much and do little." And he ends his entertaining and ingenuous little tract with this sound advice: "Let others, hereafter, take heed how they attempt the like, unless they find better meanes at home and better minds abroad."

X

A JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

X

A Journey to the North

In the summer of 1618, two years after the death of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, the greatest living English poet, conceived the original idea of a journey to Scotland on foot and unattended. There was much to attract him thither. Scotland was the native land of his friend and royal patron, King James. Jonson's father and grandfather had been of Carlisle, and the latter came thither, Jonson had reason to believe, from Annandale across the Solway; so that Jonson may well have shared that "salmon-like instinct" which the King had alleged as a sufficient reason for the royal visit

visit to the seat of his northern empire in the previous year. Jonson was now in his forty-fifth year, and was already showing signs of that extreme corpulency which, turning scorbutic and dropsical, cost him much later his life. This journey to the north may have been undertaken on his physician's advice as a prolonged and heroic constitutional. It was an eccentric and no uncourageous thing to attempt in an age in which the ways were notoriously bad and beset with dangers by no means imaginary. And the witticism of Sir Francis Bacon, who told Jonson that he "loved not to see Poesie goe on other feet than poeticall Dactylus and Spondæus," may well have been prompted by a friendly solicitude for the safety and well-being of a man whom even the worldly and unsympathetic Lord Chancellor must have prized for his learning and personal worth, if not for the lighter graces of his poetry.

At

Ben Jonson

At this time Jonson stood alone, the acknowledged leader among the men of letters of his day, a successful dramatist, critic, translator, lyrist, and writer of occasional verse, above all the accepted entertainer, in his magnificent masques at Court, of the nobility and of royalty itself. Jonson had outstood the unpopularity which his uncompromising arrogance had raised against him in his earlier plays on the boards of the common theatres. He had braved and triumphed over the attacks of envy and rivalry. He had won the patronage, and with it the regard and respect, of a larger number of "great ones" than any poet before his time, and now lived on terms of easy familiarity with half the gentry and nobility of England. Lastly Jonson had just completed a careful gathering in of all his works in his folio edition of 1616, the first example of a collective edition of an English poet superintended by himself, and in that

that an unexampled attestation of Jonson's vogue and repute among his contemporaries.

Jonson's life had never been that of a recluse. He lived in the public eye; and converse with men, the opinion of the judicious and the praise of his prince were to him as the very breath of his nostrils. At Court, where his beautiful and artistic masques were recognized as the height of the social elegance and poetical spirit of their time; on the boards of the London theatres, where the sheer genius of the *Alchemist* and the *Silent Woman* had disarmed the "mews of opposed rascality," as well as the leers of "envious criticasters;" in the tavern (Elizabethan for the later club or coffee-house), where Jonson sat enthroned in state, the earliest of that august succession of literary autocrats that ruled literary Bohemia and annexed large provinces of barbarous neighboring Philistia — Jonson was alone

alone and unmatched. Hence when the project of his journey was formed it was much bruited about, and when at last he shook the dust of London from his feet and "the Dog, the Sunne, and the Tripple Tun" for a time knew him not, it was like the departure of a sovereign from the seat of his empire.

Among the familiar figures of the day was one John Taylor, a water-man or wherryman, popularly known as "the water poet." Taylor was one of the two or three thousand "poore men" who made their living on the river conveying passengers from point to point: for the river was often safer than the highway. Taylor appears to have commenced poet by presenting his little doggerel rimes to passengers of note, thereby increasing the returns for his ferriage. He was encouraged by the wits, partly in sport and out of curiosity to see what he might do; and Jonson sagely reports that King

King James on one occasion, adjudging Sir Philip Sidney "no poet," declared that he had seen no verses in England like to "the sculler's:" a remark that may well have been true, though hardly in the sense in which his Majesty meant it. Be Taylor's poetry what it may, this royal opinion was the making of the water-man. He was now a recognized author and emulous of the fame of his rival in literary freakishness, Tom Coryat, who had sailed all the way to Hamburg in a cock-boat and traversed most of the countries of Europe on foot, writing up his adventures in his *Crudities*, as he called them, and in other books. Hence, whether by accident or design, when Jonson set out north, Taylor followed him, undertaking what he called the *Pennyles Pilgrimage or the Money-lesse Perambulation of John Taylor, alias the Kings Majesties Water-Poet*, in which "he travailed on foot from London to Edenborugh in Scotland not

not carrying any money to or fro, neither begging, borrowing or asking meate drinke or lodging." The wits of the town may have put Taylor up to his "pilgrimage;" Jonson certainly believed for a time that the water-man was "sent hither to scorn him." But this Taylor denied in his preface, declaring: "Reader, these travailes of mine into Scotland were not undertaken, neither in imitation or emulation of any man, but onely devised by my selfe on purpose to make triall of my friends, both in this kingdome of England and that of Scotland, and because I would be an eye-witnes of things which I had heard of that countrey; and whereas many shallow-brain'd critickes doe lay an aspersion on me that I was set on by others or that I did undergoe this project either in malice or mockage of Master Benjamin Jonson, I vow by the faith of a Christian that their imaginations are all wide, for he is a gentleman

man to whom I am so much obliged for many undeserved courtesies that I have received from him and from others by his favour, that I durst never be so impudent or ingratefull as either to suffer any mans perswasions or mine owne instigation to incite me to make so bad a requitall for so much goodness formerly received."

Jonson appears to have set out in June, and to have taken the eastern route by way of York and Newcastle. It is likely that he found a warm welcome and fitting entertainment at many a gentleman's house on his way. Jonson's fame was widespread over England and his journey had been much talked of when in plan. Many would welcome the man for his repute who cared less for the poet. For the age was hospitable, and all doors were open to the accredited bearer of news from Court and from London. Even in company where he was unknown, Jonson's commanding person,

son, his confident and outspoken opinions, and convivial habits, must have won him many a friend by the way-side. Jonson knew both London and Westminster, and could discourse the latest gossip of the theatre and the tap-room. He could chat with the collegian of Oxford or Cambridge, for "he was Master of Arts in both Universities," albeit "by their favor, not his studie;" nor could the most learned men of the age have disdained the friend of Camden, Selden, and Bacon; nor the most aristocratically exclusive, the accepted companion of the literary and amiable D'Aubigny, Duke of Lennox.

We have only one trace of Jonson on his way north, and that is at Darlington in Durham, where we find him engaged in the trivial but necessary matter of the purchase of a pair of new shoes, in the use of which the great poet seems to have suffered rather more than men of less weight.

Jonson

Jonson may well have appreciated Taylor's account of "the last lap" of his long walk. "Having but fifteene miles to Edenborough, mounted upon my ten toes, [I] began first to hobble and after to amble, and so being warme, I fell to pace by degrees." And Jonson must often, too, have agreed with the water-man's impressions, when he says: "The Scots doe allow almost as large measure of their miles as they doe of their drinke; for an English gallon either of ale or wine is but their quart, and one Scottish mile, now and then, may well stand for a mile and a halfe or two English."

At what time in the year Jonson arrived in Edinburgh it is impossible to say, and we can but surmise side jaunts to his ancestral Annandale and Carlisle, to Stirling, to Loch Lomond and the Highlands. Dominated by its queenly castle perched on a rock, the Edinburgh of the day was a fine walled town, "wherein I observed," writes Taylor, "the fairest

fairest and goodliest streete that ever mine eyes beheld; for I did never see or heare of a street of that length, which is halfe an English mile from the castle to a faire port which they call the Neather Bow, and from that port, the street which they call the Kenny-hate is one quarter of a mile more, downe to the Kings Palace, called Holy-rood-House, the buildings on each side of the way being all of squared stone, five, six, and seven stories high and many by-lanes and closes on each side of the way, wherein are gentlemens houses; for in the high-street the marchants and tradesmen do dwell, but the gentlemens mansions and goodliest houses are obscurely founded in the afore-said lanes: the walles are eight or tenne foote thicke, exceeding strong, not built for a day, a weeke or a moneth or a yeere, but from antiquitie to posterite, for many ages."

Edinburgh, indeed, was still the proud capital of a separate nation which had given her

her richer southern neighbor its King; and although the royal promise of a return every third year had been commuted, amid the cares of state, to a single visit in fourteen years, the Scots were too loyal and too interested in the larger political issues in which they were now sharing, to complain overmuch. Besides, Edinburgh was not without its own politics and social life. The Scottish Privy Council met in High Street twice each week throughout the greater part of the year, an august body duly preserving the picturesque ceremonial of the past and composed of forty of the chief nobles and commons of Scotland, representing in its completeness the flower of the realm. The City Council in its neighboring quarters near the Tolbooth was scarcely less august, whilst the Scottish bar, like the bench, was already renowned for its learning and its gravity, as for its social, if not for its convivial graces. Neither could

could Henry Charteris, the then principal of "the town's college," a man famed alike for his scholarship, his piety, and his modesty, nor yet Sir William Nisbit, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the owner of a fine neighboring estate of Deans, have either of them been wanting in the proverbial heartiness and open-handedness of Scottish hospitality.

Taylor had reached Scotland, it appears, by quite a different route, passing through Preston and Carlisle and stopping first at Moffat. Nor did he remain long in the capital after visiting Holyrood, the Castle, and "the haven and towne of Leeth," but passing over to Burntisland, where he met many friends, mostly petty officials of King James's Court or royal pensioners, he betook himself to the Highlands in quest of his patrons, the Earl of Mar and Sir William Murray of Abercarny. These he finally overtook at what he calls the "Brae of Marr"

Marr" (Braemar) at a great hunting which he joined and which he describes *con amore*, returning towards the end of September to Edinburgh. Taylor further tells us: "Now the day before I came from Edenborough, I went to Leeth where I found my long approved and assured good friend Master Benjamin Jonson, at one Master John Stuarts house: I thanke him for his great kindnesse towards me: for at my taking leave of him, he gave me a piece of gold of two and twenty shillings to drink his health in England. And withall, willed me to remember his kind commendations to all his friends. So with a friendly farewell, I left him as well, as I hope never to see him in a worse estate: for he is amongst noblemen and gentlemen that knowe his true worth and their owne honours, where with much respective love he is worthily entertained."

The late Professor Masson identified the Master John Stuart of this passage with a substantial

substantial householder, "incumbent of the office of Water-Bailie of Leith and owning a ship called the Post of Leith of which one hears as employed some times in the government service." How Jonson came to know him, it is impossible to surmise. The poet must have been comfortably lodged with Master Stuart, within easy walk of town, for Leith Walk was but a mile in length, and although the precise particulars of his stay in the northern capital are beyond recovery we may feel assured that in the water poet's words, "for he is amongst noblemen and gentlemen that knowe his worth," we have no idle compliment but a simple statement of the fact. Happily in this we are not left wholly to surmise. For in the register of the Edinburgh Town Council, September 25, 1618, and therefore much about the time of Taylor's farewell visit, it appears that the Provost, Bailies, Dean of the Guild, and Council "being conveynitt," the following order

order was passed: "Ordanis the Deyne of Gild to mak Benjamyn Jonsoun, Inglisman, burges and gild-brother *in communi forma*." Now we are informed that "the common form of admission in the case of ordinary burgesses was that the applicant, armed in some regulated manner with a corselet, a hagbut, or the like, appeared before the Dean of Guild and his colleagues of the Guild Chamber, took the customary oath, and paid a larger or smaller sum for his freedom according to the kind and the degree of the trading privileges to which it entitled him." But it is plain that Ben Jonson was not seeking trading rights in the city of Edinburgh, and the subsequent entries of the register make patent that this was an honorary admission to the rights and privileges of citizenship, a favor bestowed only on men of acknowledged rank or prominence and such alone as the city delighted to honor. A later entry grants £13 6s. 8d. to

to "Alexander Pattersone for wrytting and gilting of Benjamine Johnestounes burges ticket, being thryis writtin." The Council was apparently not easily satisfied with Pattersone's calligraphy, and wished the English poet to take back with him a becoming memorial of their esteem and the honor of their bestowal. Nor was this all; a later minute of the Council orders "the Thesaurer to pay to James Ainslie, laite baillie, twa hundreth twenty-ane pound, sex schillingis, four pennyis, debursit be him upone the denner maid to Benjamin Jonstoun, conforme to the act maid thairanent and compt given in of the same." No mean sum for a banquet was £221 6s. 4d., even when computed in debased Scottish coinage. Dear to the heart of convivial Jonson must have been this public honoring of the Muses in his person in the city sometime to be called the Athens of the North; and we may let our imaginations play as we will about this memorable

memorable feast in which Sir William Nisbit, the Lord Provost, in the chair surrounded by noblemen, scholars, chosen citizens, and gentlemen of Scotland, sought worthily to honor the greatest living poet of England. Depend upon it, the tables groaned with substantial fare and curious delicacies which even the *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of later days were not to surpass; nor could these northern potations have been measured in terms of the Mermaid, or even in the more temperate draughts of the Apollo Room of the Devil Tavern, Jonson's later favorite London haunt. Though Ben Jonson might hold his own in this as in all else, we may feel sure that his hosts, remembering the occasion, might have addressed their guest in Herrick's hearty words:

> For we such clusters had
> As made us nobly wild, not mad,
> And yet each verse of thine
> Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

From

From a literary point of view, however, by far the most interesting man of Jonson's meeting in Edinburgh was William Drummond, Laird of Hawthornden, a poet of no mean worth and a man of exemplary and unaffected life. Thanks to his father's post of gentleman usher to King James, young Drummond, in his transit from the University of Edinburgh to the schools of Paris and Bourges, had caught a glimpse of the English Court in 1606. He had stayed in London long enough to purchase and to read — we may believe with zest and profit to his taste — some of the popular English books of the time. For a contemporary list of his reading contains Sidney's *Arcadia*, Lyly's *Euphues*, poems of Drayton and other popular living poets, and, above all, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Lucrece*, and *The Passionate Pilgrim*. Drummond indeed was a very cultivated man and added to the classical training

training befitting a gentleman of his station, an acquaintance with French, Spanish, and Italian authors, which travel, at least as far as France, and reading had rendered considerable. Although deeply interested in the course of political affairs in his own and in his foster country of England, and touching at times the skirts of public life, Drummond had nothing in common with the adventurous horde of his fellow countrymen, which, some dozen years before he had come into his estate, had pressed southwards after their King, intent to wrest their fortunes from opulent England, and frequently offering no better claim to the royal recognition than the accident of their Scottish birth and their unquestionable needs. Nor did Drummond take an active part in the later turmoils that hurried the nation to civil war and regicide, though he was ever bold in the expression of his loyalty to his King, and is reported by some to have died of the shock received in

William Drummond

in the news of King Charles's execution. To the reserved and delicate temper of William Drummond, touched as he was with a mellowing streak of the Epicurean, the independence and seclusion of his paternal Hawthornden, its groves of oaks and beeches, its rocky glens, "silvery Esk gliding between," were things beyond the price of rubies. And he doubtless envied very little his friend, Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, a poet like himself, but one who had exchanged the reminiscent making of Senecan *Monarchic Tragedies*, as he called them, for an active life at the brilliant, frivolous, and vexatious English Court, to the end that he might write himself the Earl of Stirling.

Hawthornden House is still one of the sights of the tourist to Edinburgh, who may now go part way by train. He will recall the depleted and polluted Esk, with much, however, that is still picturesque and delightful. Hawthornden is a fine old house, hung

hung on the edge of a cliff, half stronghold, half commodious Jacobean dwelling. Above are many and diamond-paned turret windows, looking across the tree-tops to where the stream, far below, swerves around a bend to Polton. Beneath the house, cut in the primitive red sandstone, are underground chambers in which tradition affirms that Robert Bruce once hid from the pursuing soldiers of King Edward; but which were originally as likely as not the far earlier stronghold of marauding Pictish chiefs. It was to this pleasant seat, surrounded with gardens, then as now, that Drummond welcomed Jonson and there he hospitably entertained him for many days.

The two poets must have offered a striking contrast as they sat together under the great sycamore tree that is still pointed out to the credulous visitor. Jonson was a man of great stature and exceeding bulk, with a harsh-featured face, pitted with small-pox, a stubble

stubble beard, a tousled head, and careless in his dress. Drummond, twelve years his junior, was of delicate build and feature, of somewhat precise manners, and, if we may believe a contemporary miniature, rather dainty in his attire, and fastidious even to the curl and the trimming of his beard. But Jonson, despite the misrepresentation of three centuries, was no boor. Nor was Drummond a fop. For twenty years the English dramatist had known every man in England worth knowing. He had conversed with princes and received with self-respect the patronage of lords and ladies. But he had also served as a pikeman in his young manhood, trod the stage as an unsuccessful actor, and experienced the horrors of an Elizabethan felon's cell. Drummond's life had been far less eventful. He had lost the bride of his youthful choice before their marriage day and was still a bachelor, cherishing the past with a sincere, if somewhat sentimental,

sentimental, regret. Jonson, who reported his late wife "a shrew, but honest," was now a widower. The years had taken from him, also, a son and a daughter and touched his rugged nature with Death's irreparable stroke. But Jonson was no sentimentalist and deprecated any unmanly show of feeling as much as he deified the Jonsonian trinity, Wit, Learning, and Honesty or Moral Worth.

Nor were the literary ideals of the two poets less at variance than their personalities and their experience in life. Jonson's learning was almost wholly classical. Drummond even affirmed that all the Englishman's criticisms "of stranger poets" were "to no purpose, for he neither doeth understand French nor Italiannes." Be this as it may, Jonson certainly had less sympathy and appreciation for the glories of Italian literature, for Petrarch, Tasso, or Ariosto, than almost any Elizabethan writer of note. The Scottish poet,

poet, on the contrary, was saturated with the poetry of Italy, and in his love of that sweet sensuousness and in his adoration of symmetry and convention in form, practised the sonnet, the canzon, and the madrigal — those exquisite yet artificial flowers of the Italian Renaissance — in a manner which Sir Philip Sidney had hallowed to the England of a generation before.

Jonson's visit was the great event of Drummond's life. Nor was it a trifle to hold the greatest of living English poets in familiar colloquy by the fireside. Drummond was full of question and Jonson answered with candor and the large overstatement of intimate discourse. Happily for us, Drummond regarded the occasion as so memorable that he reduced to writing many of the remarks, the criticisms of contemporary authors and other personages, the anecdotes, and the opinions of his distinguished guest; in no wise purposing, as has been unjustly and injuriously

ously inferred, to blazon them to the world, but that all might inure to an interested posterity. The *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond* is one of the most valuable and interesting documents relating to the great Elizabethan age which time has suffered to reach us. In it we have the unguarded utterance of a man whose critical attainments and unparalleled opportunities entitled him to speak as few have been privileged to speak. Many of his opinions, it is true, were hasty, and some were prompted by prejudice and personal animosity. Thus Daniel, his predecessor as the chief poetical entertainer of the Court, was "a good honest man, . . . but no poet;" the dramatists, Dekker, Middleton, and Day, "were all rogues;" "Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses;" and "Marston wrote his father-in-lawes preachings, and his father-in-law his comedies." But who can doubt that the gleam of

of truth flashes out in the words that "Sir Walter Raughley esteemed more of fame than conscience," that "Salisbury never cared for any man longer nor he could make use of him," and that the late Queen "never saw herself after she became old in a true glass."

Jonson was a good hater and an honest one. Taxed by Inigo Jones, the King's architect, with whom he had quarrelled, for naming him a fool behind his back, Jonson denied it; but declared: "You're ane arrant knave, and I avouch it." On another occasion he declared to Prince Charles that "when he wanted words to express the greatest villaine in the world, he would call him ane Inigo." On the other hand Jonson was equally warm in his praises, getting by heart and quoting with delight bits of Spenser, Wotton, and other poets, affirming that "so he had written *The Burning Babe* of Father Southwell, he would have been content to destroy many of his own [poems]," and

and declaring of Donne that he was "the first poet in the world in some things." Modesty was not among the cardinal virtues of Jonson. Half in jest but half in earnest he called himself "The Poet." He honestly stated it as his conviction that "next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could make a masque;" and he maintained with warmth "that he was better versed, and knew more Greek and Latin than all the poets in England, and [even the] quintessence [of] their braines."

We must add to all this an equally candid and openly expressed opinion of his host, in which he told Drummond that he was "too good and simple, and that oft a man's modestie made a fool of his wits;" that as to Drummond's verses, "they were all good . . . save that they smelled too much of the schooles, and were not after the fancie of the tyme." He even dissuaded Drummond from poetry, "for that she had beggared him

him when he might have been a rich lawer, physitian, or merchant." Can we wonder that Drummond summarized Jonson as "a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to losse a friend than a jest; . . . [he] thinketh nothing well but what either he himself or some of his friends and countrymen hath said or done; he is passionately kynde and angry; careless either to gaine or keep; vindictive, but, if he be well answered, at himself"?

And yet the two poets exchanged many subsequent greetings of friendship and esteem. One of several extant letters of Drummond to Jonson contains information concerning emblems and *impressæ*, as they were called, gathered at the solicitation of the English poet. Others convey other archæological information. On the other hand, Jonson transcribed for Drummond certain of his unpublished poems, one of which he pompously

pompously dedicates "To the honouring respect born to the friendship contracted with the right virtuous and learned Mr. William Drummond, and the perpetuating the same by all offices of love hereafter, I, Benjamin Johnson, whom he hath honoured with the leave to be called his, have with mine own hand, to satisfy his request, written this imperfect song." Jonson never saw Drummond's written opinion of his character, which be it remembered Drummond never sought to publish. Drummond knew Jonson's summary of his own. Was Drummond a traitor to friendship? Are his *Notes* to be regarded "a tissue of malevolence?" Let him who has never entertained a single *arrière pensée* of his friend be both judge and jury, while all others hold in respectful remembrance the Scottish laird, not only for his poetry, but for his honest and unidealized portrait of a veritably great, if superficially faulty, man.

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